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POEMS FROM PUNCH

1841-1884

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THOMAS HOOD

POEMS *from* PUNCH



1841-1884

*With Introduction
by
Sir Francis C. Burnand*

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Introduction

FROM the very commencement of his journalistic career in England Mr Punch has always been poetically inclined. Not one number of his paper ever appeared without his following the example of Silas Wegg and "dropping into poetry." Inspiration seized him, and how could a born *Vates* resist the divine afflatus? Punch, Poetry, and Popularity : *Tria juncta in uno*. Whatever character Mr Punch may have elsewhere borne, and a queer character he certainly did bear in various parts of the habitable world long before he was accepted as a *persona grata* in England and had settled down into a typically respectable Londoner, it is certain that within the last century he has been cordially welcomed by the very best society, and both at home and abroad he has achieved the acknowledged position of the representative "satirical rogue,"

who, preserving self-respect and independence, utters many a true word in jest, sets down naught in malice, and is wise, witty, and ridiculously laugh-provoking.

Punch, as Miss Polly Eccles said of her father, "may have his faults, but he is a very clever man." Certainly he is ; and, certainly, so would any one person have been who possessed the active brains of such writers as were Douglas Jerrold, Gilbert à Beckett, Mark Lemon, Thackeray, Tom Hood, and, on occasion, Tennyson, and of such exceptionally fine artists as were Leech, Charles Keene, Bennett, Du Maurier, and Tenniel.

But it is with the poetry, not with the pictures, that in this special instance we have to deal. With the exception of Tom Hood's "Song of the Shirt" all poems in Mr Punch's earliest collection were published anonymously. It is a pity that there ever should have been an exception to this wise rule. It was only under pressure that in the instance of Hood's "Song of the Shirt" anonymity was subsequently dropped, and the true authorship of this poem acknowledged, to the con-

fusion of a swaggerer who had coolly announced himself as the writer of these exceptionally powerful and most popular verses.

Of the earlier verses, dated 1841, it is very difficult at this distance of time to decide as to their authorship. In my opinion the authorship does not matter one jot. I am inclined to set down "The Loves of the Plants" to Percival Leigh, known to the first Punch Staff, under Mark Lemon, as "the Professor." He dabbled in poetry and plants. He was a medical student and undefeated herbalist.

"The Epitaph on a Candle" is probably the work of Thomas Hood. It is in that playful punning style which was dealt with by Thackeray with sad severity, and if not written by Hood, it is at least by one of his clever imitators. It has not infrequently happened on Punch, as on other papers, that when one of "his young men" made a hit, its style has been forthwith imitated, and the imitation having achieved success, has put the "inquirer after truth" on a wrong scent.

"The Prayer of the People" is Tom

Hood's, but powerful as is this, and as is also Hood's "The Pauper's Christmas Carol," they are both overshadowed by the greatest of his efforts, "The Song of the Shirt," which has achieved immortality. Of this no one can ever tire; it appeals to all hearts. From the revelations that occasionally come to us through the newspapers, cases akin to those that deeply touched Hood's heart, and inspired his fervent poetry, yet occur, that forcibly recall to us the deep pathos of Hood's lines, and cause us to wonder whether after all "The Song of the Shirt" was written in vain. But from the evidence of the present day, we may fairly conclude that Hood did not write in vain, and that a great deal has been done for the poor sempstresses and their working sisters, though very much yet remains to be accomplished for the benefit of those whose necessities compel them to earn their wages under some form or other of the "sweating" system.

Hood's "Song of the Shirt" appeared in Mr Punch's Christmas number for 1843. This Number was entitled "Punch's

Triumphal Procession." Hood's poem was there placed by the judicious editor, Mark Lemon, who, it is said, in order to make it fit into the space at his disposal, eliminated a verse. What this verse was I have been unable to discover, as, in Hood's works, and wherever I have come across the quoted poem, it is identical with Hood's, as it first appeared, in *Punch*.

"The Pauper's Song" is a very Hoodish poem, written by Percival Leigh.

The "After-Thought" was the second poem, for *Punch*, written by Alfred Tennyson. The first was entitled "The New Timon and the Poets," and was a castigation bestowed by the Laureate on Bulwer for the latter's unprovoked attack upon him. The following week Tennyson was pleased "to moderate the anger of his tongue," and wrote the poem which is published in this collection. The *Punch* Staff, under Mark Lemon, was heartily anti-Bulwerish. Tennyson's two poems greatly delighted Thackeray, who was not actuated by any great personal liking for either Charles Dickens or his autocratic literary patron Sir Edward Bulwer (afterwards Lord) Lytton.

Thackeray's "Mahogany Tree" is the next piece of any real importance. It was a great favourite with the *convives* around the Punch table, in the "good old days," and, after Thackeray had "joined the majority," Mark Lemon, Horace Mayhew, the Professor, and Shirley Brooks when convivially and sentimentally inclined would, *post-prandially*, give "occasional verses" of the song as an affectionate tribute to the memory of "dear old Thack."

Except such verse as was accepted by the editor from "outsiders" I should be inclined to attribute most of the poems, at all events after 1851, to Shirley Brooks (who had retired from "The Man in the Moon," and become a "Punch man"), some to Tom Taylor, a few to Percival Leigh, and, about Christmas time, some "seasonable" verse from Mark Lemon. Thackeray's verses, written for Punch, are for the most part, if not entirely, to be found in his collected works.

In 1855 (for the number of Punch, dated March 10), Shirley Brooks wrote "Dagon" on the death of the Emperor Nicholas, one

of the shortest, and, at the same time, one of the most powerful of the many poems that Shirley contributed to *Punch*.

As I have already intimated most of the *Punch* poetry, between 1850 and 1874, including, as I am informed, the verses in memory of Jerrold and Dickens, may be correctly attributed to Shirley Brooks. If the present collection be compared with the carefully compiled "*Punch*" history by Mr Spielmann, with the "Letters and Diaries of Shirley Brooks" by George Soames Layard, and with Thackeray's work for *Punch*, I think it will be found that my estimate of the versifying done by Shirley Brooks is not very wide of the mark. As I write this, remembering the Falstaffian figure of Mr *Punch*'s first Editor, Mark Lemon, it occurs to me to wonder if this old phrase, of being "wide of the mark," was ever applied to one of Mark's expansive waistcoats?

With the "Nursery Rhymes" Shirley Brooks started a fashion which at last became wearisome and thoroughly tired out its originator, who delivered himself of two final verses, and then dropped for

ever all his interest in the so-called "Nursery Rhymes," which, in later years, seem to have been resuscitated under the style and title of "Limericks."

Among the anonymous works, within meaning of the "copyright act," which the publishers of this volume had selected for re-publication, a nautical song of some length came under my notice. It was styled "The Great Whaling Expedition by Benny the Bo'sen," and, at first sight, it seemed to present certain features not unfamiliar to the writer who now has the honour to address you. Suddenly, recognition of its identity flashed across me. Memory took me back years—several years—nay, very many, for the date affixed to it was February 25, 1865. Forty-three years ago the inspiration came to the anonymous poet (now, for the first time, revealing his name under the initials "F. C. B."), who, when he wrote this song had been "on Punch" as the youngest member of his Staff, for five or six years. It originated in a story told me by Johnnie Dean, who, when assisting in laying the Atlantic Cable, remembered how some one of the com-

pany aboard on being asked for a song could only volunteer half a tune and one line, which was, "We went for to catch a whale, Brave Boys!" The singer never got any further, but he, so to put it, saved his stakes, as the line was accepted as evidence of his good will, and the musical members of the dinner-party sang it over and over again with such impromptu additions as occasionally came into any singer's head. When, on convivial occasions, I was "called upon," it suddenly occurred to me to invent the metrical form and the tune (I say "invent" not "compose and originate" as though I am perfectly certain that neither form of words nor the tune were new, yet, could I never trace their origin to anything I had ever heard) to suit the idea of "The Whale," which from that time forth became *my* private and particular property. What conducted to its popularity, convivially, was that any one present was at liberty to suggest a word rhyming to "whale," which the singer had to fit, somehow or other, into his verse, and so the song lasted just so long as these suggestions might be forthcoming. When

the supply dried up, the singer had the last rhyme and last verse in reserve, the climax being that in the end "We did *not* catch that whale, Brave Boys!"

Thackeray's chaunt "Little Billee" commencing, "There were three sailors of Bristol City," might well have been developed in a similar style. This "chaunt" of Thackeray's never appeared in *Punch*, and the original is only to be found in a book by Samuel Bevan entitled "Sand and Canvass."

Perhaps, in the old ledgers of Messrs Bradbury, Evans & Co. (now, as I suppose, in the possession of their successors Bradbury, Agnew & Co.), might be found entered the names of some of the writers of these republished lyrics. But of what value, or interest, such information can possibly be to the general public, is to me a puzzle of which I have no desire to find the solution.

F. C. BURNAND

Song for Punch Drinkers

(From Schiller)

FOUR be the elements,
Here we assemble 'em,
Each of man's world
And existence an emblem.

Press from the lemon
The slow flowing juices.
Bitter is life
In its lessons and uses.

Bruise the fair sugar lumps,—
Nature intended
Her sweet and severe
To be everywhere blended.

Pour the still water—
Unwarning by sound,
Eternity's ocean
Is hemming us round !

Mingle the spirit,
The life in the bowl;
Man is an earth-clod
Unwarmed by a soul!

Drink of the stream
Ere its potency goes!
No bath is refreshing
Except while it glows!

December 18, 1841.

The Loves of the Plants

THE gay *Daffodilly*, an amorous blade,
Stole out of his bed in the dark,
And calling his brother, *Jon-Quil*, forth he stray'd
To breathe his love vows to a *Violet* maid
Who dwelt in a neighbouring park.

A spiteful old *Nettle-aunt* frown'd on their love ;
But *Daffy*, who laugh'd at her power,
A *Shepherd's-purse* slipped in the nurse's *Fox-glove*,
Then up *Jacob's-ladder* he crept to his love,
And stole to the young *Virgin's-bower*.

The *Maiden's-blush Rose*—and she seem'd all dismay'd,
Array'd in her white *Lady's-smock*,

She call'd *Mignonette*—but the sly little
jade,

That instant was hearing a sweet serenade
From the lips of a tall *Hollyhock*.

The *Pheasant's-eye*, always a mischievous
wight,

For prying out something not good,
Avow'd that he peep'd through the keyhole
that night,

And clearly discern'd by a glow-worm's
pale light,

Their *Two-faces-under-a-hood*.

Old Dowager *Peony*, deaf as a door,
Who wish'd to know more of the facts,
Invited Dame *Mustard* and Miss *Hellebore*,
With Miss *Periwinkle*, and many friends
more,

One evening to tea and to tracts.

The *Butter-cups* ranged, defamation ran
high,

While every tongue join'd the debate;

Miss *Sensitive* said, 'twixt a groan and a sigh,
Though she felt much concern'd—yet she thought her dear *Vi*—
Had grown rather bulbous of late.

Thus the tale spread about through the busy parterre :

Miss *Columbine* turn'd up her nose,
And the prude Lady *Lavender* said, with a stare,
That her friend, *Mary-gold*, had been heard to declare,
The creature had toy'd with the *Rose*.

Each sage look'd severe, and each *Cocks-comb* look'd gay,
When *Daffy* to make their mind easy,
Miss *Violet* married one morning in May,
And, as sure as you live, before next Lady-day,
She brought him a *Michaelmas-daisy*.

July 31, 1841.

Songs for the Sentimental

I AM thine in *my* gladness,
I'm thine in *thy* tears ;
My love it can change not
With absence or years.
Were a dungeon thy dwelling,
My home it should be,
For its gloom would be sunshine
If I were with thee.
But the light has no beauty,
Of thee, love, bereft ;
I am thine, and thine only !
Thine!—over the left !
Over the left !

As the wild Arab hails,
On his desolate way,
The palm-tree which tells
Where the cool fountains play,

So thy presence is ever
The herald of bliss,
For there's love in thy smile,
And there's joy in thy kiss.
Thou hast won me—then wear me !
Of thee, love, bereft,
I should fade like a flower,
Yes!—over the left !
Over the left.

August 7, 1841.

Epitaph on a Candle

A WICKED one lies buried here,
Who died in a *decline* ;
He never rose in rank, I fear,
Though he was born to *shine*.

He once was *fat*, but now indeed,
He's thin as any griever ;
He died,—the Doctors all agreed,
Of a most *burning* fever.

One thing of him is said with truth,
With which I'm much amused ;
It is—that when he stood, forsooth,
A *stick* he always used.

Now *winding-sheets* he sometimes made,
But this was not enough,
For finding it a poorish trade,
He also dealt in *snuff*.

If e'er you said "*Go out, I pray,*"
He much ill nature show'd ;
On such occasions he would say,
"Vy, if I do, *I'm blow'd.*"

In this his friends do all agree,
Although you'll think I'm joking,
When *going out* 'tis said that he
Was very fond of *smoking.*

Since all religion he despised,
Let these few words suffice,
Before he ever was baptised
They *dipp'd* him once or twice.

October 23, 1841.

The Destruction of the Aldermen

A Mansion-House Melody

APOPLEXIA came down on the
Alderman fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming
with jaundice like gold,
And the sheen of the spectres that own'd
his behest
Glimmer'd bright as the gas at a new Lord
May'r's feast.

Every fiend that humanity shrinks from
was there—
Hepatitis, Lumbago, with hollow-eyed
Care,
Hypochondria, and Gout grinning ghastly
with pain,
And of Incubi phantoms a horrible train.

And onwards they gallop'd in brotherly
pairs ;
Their pennons pale yellow, their steeds
were night-mares ;
And their leader's grim visage a darksome
smile wore
As he gave the word " Halt " at the
Mansion-house door.

The vision dismounted, and peering within,
'Midst a rattle of glasses and knife and
fork din,
His victims beheld, tucking in calipash,
While they hob-nobb'd and toasted in
Burgundy wash.

Then he straightway amongst them his
grisly form cast,
And breathed on each puffing red face as
he pass'd ;
And the eyes of the feasters wax'd deadly
and chill,
And their stomachs once heaved, and for
ever grew still !

And the turtle devourers were stretched on
the floor—
Each cheek changed to purple—so crimson
before !
Their dewlaps all dabbled with red wine
and ale,
And extremities cold as a live fish's
tail !

And there lay the Liv'ryman, breathless
and lorn,
With waistcoat and new inexpressibles
torn ;
And the Hall was all silent, the band
having flown,
And the waiters stared wildly on, sweating
and blown !

And Cripplegate widows are loud in their
wail !
And Mary-Axe orphans all trembling and
pale !

For the Alderman glory has melted
away,
As mists are dispersed by the glad dawn
of day.

November 13, 1841.

The Prayer of the People

THERE is a cry upon the earth,
A cry of want and woe,—
It rises from our cities vast,
From hamlets lone and low ;
Where roll our commerce-laden waves,
Where fields of verdure spread,
Ascends the still unanswered prayer—
Give us our daily bread.

The voice of wasted youth is there—
Of childhood early chilled ;
Of famine, ruined homes, and hopes
Which time can ne'er rebuild ;
Of age, upon whose downward way
No genial lights are shed ;—
All—all are blended in the prayer—
Give us our daily bread.

O ! fair and fresh the early spring
Her budding wreath displays,
To all the wide earth promising
The joy of harvest days ;
Yet many a waste of wavy gold
Hath bent above the dead ;
Then let the living share it too—
Give us our daily bread.

Of old a nation's cry shook down
The sword-defying wall,
And ours may reach the mercy-seat,
Though not the lordly hall.
God of the Corn ! shall man restrain
Thy blessings, freely shed ?
O ! look upon the isles at last—
Give us our daily bread.

March 6, 1842.

The Song of the Shirt

WITH fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat, in unwomanly
rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the “Song of the Shirt.”

“Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof!
And work—work—work,
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It’s O! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If this is Christian work!

“Work—work—work
Till the brain begins to swim ;
Work—work—work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim !
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream !

“O ! Men, with Sisters dear !
O ! men, with Mothers and Wives !
It is not your linen you’re wearing out,
But human creatures’ lives !
Stitch—stitch—stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A Shroud as well as a shirt.

“But why do I talk of Death ?
That Phantom of grisly bone,
I hardly fear his terrible shape,
It seems so like my own—
It seems so like my own,
Because of the fasts I keep,

Oh ! God ! that bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap !

“Work—work—work !
My labour never flags ;
And what are its wages ? A bed of
straw,
A crust of bread—and rags.
That shatter'd roof — and this naked
floor—
A table—a broken chair—
And a wall so blank,
My shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there !

“Work—work--work !
From weary chime to chime,
Work—work—work—
As prisoners work for crime !
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Till the heart is sick, and the brain
benumb'd,
As well as the weary hand.

“Work—work—work,
In the dull December light,
And work—work—work,
When the weather is warm and bright—
While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling
As if to show me their sunny backs
And twit me with the Spring.

“Oh ! but to breathe the breath
Of the cowslip and primrose sweet—
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet,
For only one short hour
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want
And the walk that costs a meal !

“Oh, but for one short hour !
A respite however brief!
No blessed leisure for Love or Hope,
But only time for Grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart,
But in their briny bed

My tears must stop, for every drop
Hinders needle and thread!"

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch! stitch! stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch,—
Would that its tone could reach the Rich!
She sang the "Song of the Shirt!"

"Punch's Triumphal Procession," Xmas 1843.

Wakley's Last

A Peckham Elegy

THE verdant sunbeam gaily
sweeps
O'er Peckham's mosques and
minarets ;
The moss-grey sapling fondly weeps
Over the daisied lake, whose jets
Perfume the hours and deck the air,
And make fair Nature still more fair.

Uprising, see the fitful lark
Unfold his pinion to the stream,
The pensive watch-dog's mellow bark
O'ershades yon cottage like a dream—
The playful duck and warbling bee,
Hop gaily on from tree to tree.

How calmly could my spirit rest
Beneath yon primrose-bell so blue,

And watch those airy oxen, drest
In every tint of purling hue,
As on they hurl the gladsome plough,
While fairy Zephyrs deck each bough.

January 27, 1844.

The Pauper's Song

A HOUSELESS, famish'd, desperate man,
A ragged wretch am I,
And how, and when, and where I can,
I feed, and lodge, and lie.
And I must to the Workhouse go,
If better may not be ;
AY, *If*, indeed ! the Workhouse ? No !—
The Gaol,—the Gaol for me.

There, shall I get the larger crust,
The warmer house-room there ;
And choose a Prison since I must,
I'll choose it for its fare.
The dog will snatch the biggest bone,
So much the wiser he :
Call me a dog ;—the name I'll own :—
The Gaol,—the Gaol for me.

What, masters, am I not a Hound?
Have I a soul like you?—
You'd treat me better, I'll be bound,
If ye believed it true.
The Pauper than the very Thief
You use in worse degree;
Keep to yourselves, then, your relief:—
The Gaol,—the Gaol for me.

The Felon's dress is soft to feel
As that which shames the Poor;
The Convict eats as good a meal,
But gets a little more.
Pauper and Thief are much the same,
For aught that I can see:
Well then; what matter for the name?—
The Gaol—the Gaol for me.

January 18, 1845.

After-thought

*Written by Tennyson after his reply to the attack made
upon him by Bulwer Lytton*

A H, God ! the petty fools of
rhyme,
That shriek and sweat in
pigmy wars
Before the stony face of Time,
And look'd at by the silent stars ;—

That hate each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite,
That pinch their brothers in the throng,
And scratch the very dead for spite ;

And strain to make an inch of room
For their sweet selves, and cannot hear
The sullen Lethe rolling doom
On them and theirs, and all things
here ;

When one small touch of Charity
Could lift them nearer Godlike State,
Than if the crowded Orb should cry
Like those that cried DIANA great.

And *I* too talk, and lose the touch
I talk of. Surely after all,
The noblest answer unto such
Is kindly silence when they brawl.

ALCIBIADES.

March 7, 1846.

Lines on the Lash

QUEEN of Christian England,
hearken ;
Know, the nation that thou
swayest,
That a guilty shade doth darken :
Wilt thou chase it ? for thou mayest.
Thy wish only need be spoken
In the senate of the land,
And the cursed Lash is broken ;
For thy wish is a command.

Royal woman ! hast thou thought
That the men who guard thy crown,
And to shield thee think it nought
To lay life and member down,
For a trifling word of scorn,
For a hasty threat or blow,
Have their flesh to pieces torn
Whilst the living blood doth flow ?

Thy defender hast thou seen
In his red and gold array'd,
Hast admired his gallant mien
At review or on parade.
Hast thou ever seen him stripp'd?
Hast thou heard him shriek and
groan
Whilst his quivering flesh was whipp'd
Whipp'd by piecemeal from the bone?

Hast thou traced him to the bed,
Where, in torments worse than death,
He at length hath bow'd the head,
And hath yielded up the breath?
Gracious Lady, credit us,
It is true that such things be.
Should the soldier perish thus—
He who would have died for thee?

Let thy queenly voice be heard—
Who shall dare to disobey?—
It but costs thy Royal word,
And the lash is cast away.

With thyself it rests to scour
From our arms the loathsome stain ;
Then of mercy show thy power,
And immortal be thy reign !

September 5, 1846.

Punch's Christmas Carol, 1846

HERE comes Christmas —
ancient, jolly,
Crown'd with mistletoe and
holly.

Oh ! the pleasure, oh ! the treat,
To behold the joints of meat—
With a concourse whilst we stop,
Gazing at each butcher's shop—
And the turkey-laden coaches,
Thickly thronging Town's approaches :
But a crowd, too numerous,
Answers, “What is that to us ? ”

In each grocer's window, see
What a heap of spicery !
Citron, cloves, and cinnamon—
What a sight to look upon !

Candied orange-peel, and plums,
Nutmegs, raisins, figs in drums ;—
What delicious visions rise,
Of plum-puddings and mince-pies !
Ah ! but thousands answer thus :—
“ Well-a-day ! what’s that to us ? ”

Some, alas ! there are, to whom
Christmas brings but cold and gloom,
No warm fire, and no good cheer,
Though it comes but once a year ;
Gentlefolks, suppose we try
If we cannot change their cry,
And provide them with a reason
Thus to hail the jovial Season :
“ Christmas—though necessitous—
Thou art something still to us ! ”

December 19, 1846.

The Old Year and The New

OLD YEAR (1846)

I FAINT upon December's lap of snow,
I watch my lees of life drop one by one;

Young forty-seven is on the watch below,
To fill my shoes, almost ere breath be gone.

But listen, greedy heir, tho' faint and old,

My heart is big with work, not worked in vain;

This hand, now palsied, forced Protection's hold

And loosed the giant Commerce from his chain.

And all this night, the last night of my life,
Ere I go hence to join the ghosts of
Time,

I have had glorious visions.—War and
Strife

Lay dead, and by them Hunger, Hate,
and Crime.

And Peace and Plenty, Knowledge, Hope,
and Love,

Shone round my bed like angels, and
bowed down

To my dim eyes; and then there came
a dove,

That placed on my frore hair an olive
crown.

Who will crown thee, young upstart?
What remains

Of glory such as mine beneath the stars?

The year, that shook from industry her
chains,

The year that spoke the doom of human
wars!

NEW YEAR (1847)

Scowl not in death, old sire, nor think my
hand
Would break one leaf from off thy
crown:—In thee
I bow to a great year; but through the
land
Achievement large enough is left for
me.

Thy boon is incomplete; what thou hast
given,
Material blessing to material man,—
Who waits what I must do, ere he have
striven
Up to the compass of his human span.

Thou gavest wealth,—I'll teach him how
to use it;
Thou gavest peace,—its arts I must
bestow;
War, thanks to thee, is such, that they
who choose it,
Choose isolation, beggary, and woe.

But Ignorance is left, and where that is,
Is war 'twixt light and darkness, be it
mine
To chase that darkness back to the abyss,
To lift that light, wide as age, sex, or
clime.

What schools must I not build? What
prisons purge?
What self-contented foulness clear
away?—
Oh, there is work for me—and in my dirge
Deeds may be told, great as in thine
to-day!

January 2, 1847.

The Mahogany Tree

CHRISTMAS is here ;
Winds whistle shrill,
Icy and chill :
Little care we.

Little we fear
Weather without,
Sheltered about
The Mahogany Tree.

Commoner greens,
Ivy and oaks,
Poets, in jokes,
Sing, do ye see :
Good fellows' shins
Here, boys, are found,
Twisting around
The Mahogany Tree.

Once on the boughs,
Birds of rare plume

Sang, in its bloom ;
Night-birds are we :
Here we carouse,
Singing, like them,
Perched round the stem
Of the jolly old tree.

Here let us sport,
Boys, as we sit ;
Laughter and wit
Flashing so free.
Life is but short—
When we are gone,
Let them sing on,
Round the old tree.

Evenings we knew,
Happy as this ;
Faces we miss,
Pleasant to see.
Kind hearts and true,
Gentle and just,
Peace to your dust !
We sing round the tree.

Care like a dun,
Lurks at the gate ;
Let the dog wait ;
Happy we'll be !
Drink every one ;
Pile up the coals,
Fill the red bowls,
Round the old tree !

Drain we the cup.—
Friend, art afraid ?
Spirits are laid
In the Red Sea.
Mantle it up ;
Empty it yet ;
Let us forget,
Round the old tree.

Sorrows begone !
Life and its ills,
Duns and their bills,
Bid we to flee.

Come with the dawn,
Blue-devil sprite,
Leave us to-night
Round the old tree.

January 2, 1847.

The City Gentleman to his Infant Son

OH slumber, my youngster, in
ignorance blest,
No thought of the Panic
deprives thee of rest;
Though things e'er so bad in the City may
be,
They give no concern, my young shaver,
to thee.

Thou dread'st not to think of the firms that
may smash ;
Thou feel'st not the lowness of credit and
cash ;
Thou heed'st not the tightness of money a
jot,
It pinches thee—happy young gentleman !
—not.

The Bank may determine to put on the
screw,

Thou wilt not be frighten'd ; thou'l never
look blue ;

What matter to thee, little fellow of mine,
If discount's at three-and-a-half, or at nine ?

Unconscious art thou of such things as
bad debts,

With nothing to hope in the shape of
assets ;

Thou art not dishearten'd—thou art not
dismay'd,

To think of the bill to be noted or paid.

Then, slumber, young gentleman, rest while
you may,

You'll surely know all about these things
one day ;

Sleep on, undisturb'd by the world's busy
hum ;

For, like a young bear, you've your troubles
to come.

November 20, 1847.

The Lament of Erin

A LAS ! for the mournful eclipse
of my glory,
The loss of the name that I
formerly bore,
For which I was famous in song and in
story ;
Her ancient renown is poor Erin's no
more !

The land of the gallant, warm-hearted, and
grateful,
I once was esteemed by the nations to
be ;
Malignant, unthankful, cold-blooded, and
hateful,
Were words never breathed with the
mention of me.

And whence hath my light thus disastrously faded?

To whom must I say that I owe my disgrace?

Not Saxon invaders have Erin degraded;
Her shame hath been wrought by her own native race.

My children, by graceless declaimers imbruted,

And madden'd, have learned to do evil for good;

The mouths of my sons are with slander polluted

With slander cast back in requital for food.

My fields are ensanguined with slaughter unsparing;

By murder the noble and bountiful die,
The crime unredeem'd e'en by ruffianly daring—

Deliberate, dastardly, sneaking, and sly.

With sorrow and shame I behold, broken-hearted,
My once verdant shamrock now reddened
with gore ;
My fair fame is tarnish'd, my glory departed :
Oh ! call me, my children, Mavourneen
no more !

December 4, 1847.

To Jenny Lind

WHEN the waters are stark,
and the crystalline snow
Sparkles keen and un-
changed in the morn's
ruddy glow,
And the prism-coloured icicles flash in the
sun,
The bitter cold stills all the song-birds but
one.

Now the linnet, the lark, and the throstle
are dumb,
E'en the stout little wren's gallant heart is
o'ercome,
And the Nightingale, warbler so wondrous
of tone,
That sings in the winter, is tuneful alone.

Sweetest creature, in song without rival
or peer,
Far more inwardly vibrate thy notes than
the ear,
For there speaks in that music, pure,
gentle, refined,
The exquisite voice of a beautiful mind—

Of a spirit of earnestness, goodness, and
truth,
Of a heart full of tender compassion and
ruth,
Ever ready to comfort, and succour and
bless,
In sorrow and suffering, in want and
distress.

And the Nightingale's name by faint voices
is praised,
For poverty aided and Charities raised ;
Not more good was the bird in whom
childhood believes—
The Redbreast that cover'd the children
with leaves.

And in tribute and love to a Memory
revered,
By her magical voice noble monuments
reared,
The high-minded communion with Genius
attest,
Which gloriously thrills in the Nightin-
gale's breast.

Now this Nightingale rare, in the winter
who sings,
Being not yet a seraph, is one without
wings;
And her name, which has travell'd as wide
as the wind,
Is kind-hearted, generous, dear JENNY
LIND.

January 18, 1849.

The Beggar at the Gate

A BEGGAR maid crouches at
England's door ;
Squalid and sad she crouches
there alway,
Shivering, unsheltered, thro' the winter
frore,
Scorching, unshaded, thro' the summer
day.

The sun comes up upon that beggar's lair,
Her gaunt and grasping hand, her rags
of green ;
The sun goes down upon that beggar's
stare,
All listless, save when stirred by hunger
keen.

She is not, sure, a beggar born, for pride
Momently lights that face all shrunk
and scarred ;

'Tis a gaunt skeleton of strength untried,
A wreck of beauty, sore misused and
marred.

She might be one of ancient race and
strong,
Fallen to fate of harlot and of thrall,
In whom doth jostle memory of wrong
And bitter hopelessness, and hopes of
gall.

And as forth fares proud England, day by
day,
For toil or traffic, pleasure or parade,
Still doth she find this beggar in the way,
Like LAZARUS at DIVES' portal laid.

Still that gaunt hand is on her robe of
pall,
That hollow voice in her unwilling ear,
And ceaseless still that cry for bread doth
fall,
Which, hunger-prompted, heart of stone
must hear.

Nor Pity only bends her to the cry,
She knows that desperate wretchedness
is mad ;
'Tis easy raising fire, the means hard
by,
And treasonous poison may be cheaply
had.

And she is rich, and richer fain would
be ;
And beggar drudges work for scanty
pay ;
The pauper's dole for paupers bait may
be,
Whence better fed and clad would turn
away.

So day by day the beggar's dole is
given
With grudge and grumble, ling'ringly
and loath—
A charity without that gracious leaven
Which blesseth giver and receiver
both.

Every such gift the giver leaves more hard,

And the receiver more unthankful finds ;
By acts which should unite is union barred,

And Pity chafes the sore, e'en as it binds.

This should not last — and must not —
neither can ;

Oh England, lift this beggar-maid forlorn,

Leaving on one, with heart and right of man,

No curse save that whereunto man was born,—

In the brow's sweat to earn the needful bread ;

Strengthen those feeble hands to dig and spin,

Till listless, lazy Pauperdom be fled,

And the day's work its fair day's wage shall win.

What interest urges, urges also love ;
Let England to that beggar stoop her
knee,
Lift up her rags, her matted hair remove,
And in that squalid maid a sister see !

Sister, that but step-sister's lot hath
known ;
Sister, that oft has cursed, and struck,
and striven ;
Sister, that hath, as England's self must
own,
Much to forgive—as much to be for-
given.

March 17, 1849.

An Elegy, written in a London Churchyard

By a Tradesman in the Vicinity

THE sexton tolls the knell till
parting day,
The latest funeral train has
paid its fee,
The mourners homeward take their dreary
way,
And leave the scene to Typhus and to me.

Now fades the crowded graveyard on the
sight,
But all, its air who scent, their nostrils
hold,
Save where the beadle drones, contented
quite,
And drowsy mutes their arms in slumber
fold.

Save where, hard by yon soot-incrusted
tower,
A Reverend Man does o'er his port
complain,
Of such as would, by sanitary power,
Inva^de his ancient customary gain.

Beneath those arid mounds, that dead
wall's shade,
Where grows no turf above the
mouldering heap,
All in their narrow cells together laid,
The former people of the parish
sleep.

The queasy call of sewage-breathing
morn,
The ox, urg'd bellowing to the butcher's
shed,
The crowd's loud clamouring at his
threatening horn,
No more shall rouse them from their
loathly bed.

For them no more the chamber-light shall
burn,
The busy doctor ply his daily care,
Nor children to their sire from school
return,
And climb his knees the dreaded pest to
share.

Good folks, impute not to their friends the
fault,
If memory o'er their bones no tombstone
raise ;
Where there lie dozens huddled in one
vault,
No art can mark the spot where each
decays.

No doubt, in this revolting place are
laid,
Hearts lately pregnant with infectious
fire ;
Hands, by whose grasp contagion was
conveyed,
As sure as electricity by wire.

Full many a gas of direst power unclean,
The dark o'erpeopled graves of London
bear,
Full many a poison, born to kill un-
seen,
And spread its rankness in the neigh-
bouring air.

Some district Surgeon, that with dauntless
breast
The epidemic 'mongst the poor with-
stood,
Some brave, humane Physician here may
rest,
Some Curate, martyrs to infected blood.

To some doom'd breast the noxious vapour
flies,
Some luckless lung the deadly reek
inspires,
Ev'n from the tomb morbific fumes
arise,
Ev'n in men's ashes live Disorder's
fires.

For thee, who, shock'd to see th' un-
honoured dead,
Dost in these lines their shameful plight
relate;
If, chance, by sanitary musings led,
Some graveyard-gleaner shall inquire
thy fate.

Haply some muddle-headed clerk will
say,
We used to see him at the peep of
dawn,
Shaving with hasty strokes his beard
away,
Whene'er his window-curtains were
undrawn.

There would he stand o'erlooking yonder
shed,
That hides those relics from the public
eye,
And watch what we were doing with the
dead,
And count the funerals daily going by.

One morn we miss'd him in the 'custom'd
shop ;
Behind the counter where he used to
be,
Another serv'd ; nor at his early chop,
Nor at the "Cock," nor at the "Cheese,"
was he.

The next, by special wish, with small
array,
To Kensall Green we saw our neighbour
borne,
Thither go read (if thou canst read) the
lay
With which a chum his headstone did
adorn.

THE EPITAPH

Here rest with decency the bones in
earth,
Of one to Comfort and to Health un-
known,
Miasma ever plagued his humble hearth,
And Scarlatina mark'd him for her own.

Long was his illness, tedious, and severe,
Hard by a London Churchyard dwelt our
friend ;
He follow'd to the grave a neighbour's bier,
He met thereby ('twas what he fear'd) his
end.

No longer seek Corruption to enclose
Within the places of mankind's abode ;
But far from cities let our dust repose,
Where daisies blossom on the verdant
clod.

September 15, 1849.

The Return of Prosperity and the Board of Trade

NOW matters are mending ; our exports, ascending,
Cause Business to caper and Credit to crow ;
Our fisheries are rising in manner surprising,
And butter is moving, and cheese on the go.
Up cordage has gotten, and fabrics of cotton
Exhibit an increase delightful to see ;
Glass, hardware, and pottery, with drapery,
silk-shottery,
And leather, are doing as well as may be.
Our dealings in linen give proof of a spinning,
Which all Europe's spiders can't equal us in ;

We've sold the world metals for saucepans
and kettles,
And had a proportionate influx of tin.
With colours for dying and painters
supplying,
We're driving a trade very flattering to
hope,
Which consideration affords consolation
For not having been quite so well off for
soap.
Despite contradiction, without any fiction,
Our stationery has advanced we may
say;
The woollen trade, lastly, is prospering
vastly:
The inference we draw from these facts
is—Hooray !

January 12, 1850.

Household Songs

No. I.—THE SONG OF THE TEAPOT

THEIR goblets of silver, their
vases of gold,
Let pleasure and luxury boast:
To the teapot alone will
philosophy hold,
And bread will be ever its toast.

Yes! 'Tis in the teapot life's type may be
seen,
Reflection should on it be fixed;
Existence is neither all black nor all green,
Our joys and our sorrows are mix'd.

From the depths of the teapot there's
plenty to learn,
How adversity profit may bring;
For at tea-time the kettle will bid us
discern
How in spite of hot water to sing.

No. 2.—THE SONG OF THE SUGAR BASIN

Roam—roam for years from flower to
flower,
Thou, idly busy bee !
Thou canst not match with all thy power
The sweets enclosed by me.

With prejudice I am not blind ;
The sugars I contain,
If to the tea alone confin'd,
Were sweet, alas ! in vain.

No ! With the generous grog I'll blend,
As with the sober tea :
For sociality, a friend
Will ever find in me.

No. 3.—THE SONG OF THE MILK JUG

I know I am a mockery,
I hate my very name ;
Into the world of crockery
I know not how I came.

A milk jug is an article
They might as well put down,
For, oh ! there's not a particle
Of genuine milk in town.

Far better to have given me
A name I could deserve,
Than cruelly have driven me
From truth's bright path to swerve ;
For when of milk jugs trippingly
I hear them round me talk,
There trickle down me drippingly
Tears of diluted chalk.

Oh, how I hate hypocrisy !
Would I could place myself
In that enlarged democracy,
The world of common delf.
Although to fine gim-crackery
'Tis fated I belong ;
No matter—" Down with quackery "
Shall ever be my song.

December 7, 1850.

Who's Who ?

WHO, when I feel a little ill,
Sends me a daily draft and
pill,
Followed by a tremendous
bill ?

My doctor !

Who preaches self-denying views,
Charges a heavy rate for pews,
And calls on me for Easter dues ?

My parson !

Who, when a law-suit I have won,
For a large sum begins to dun,
To which the "extra costs" have run ?

My lawyer !

Who, for my trousers, which, with straps,
Have cost him half-a-sovereign, p'raps,
Down in the bill two guineas claps ?

My tailor !

Who, when I wish of beef a stone,
Composed of wholesome meat alone,
Sends me at least three pounds of bone ?
My butcher !

Who, when I send a joint to bake,
Away from it contrives to take
Enough a hearty meal to make ?
My baker !

Who lends my *Times* to read in town,
And when I at the lateness frown,
Tells me the engine's broken down ?
My newsman !

Who coolly pawns my "other" shirt,
And tells me, with assurance pert,
She's only dropped it in the dirt ?
My laundress !

Who peeps in every private note,
Wears my best neckcloth round his throat,
And at the "Swarry" sports my coat ?
My footman !

Who brings my shaving water late,
And with a basket full of plate
One morning doth evaporate ?

My valet !

Who flirts with soldiers dressed so fine,
And leaves that sweetest pet of mine
To tumble in the Serpentine ?

My nursemaid !

Who comes to make a formal call,
Merely to criticise us all,
When severed by the party wall ?

My neighbour !

Who's who, or where shall he be sought,
Who may not now and then be caught
At something wrong in act or thought ?

Why ! No one !

January 18, 1851.

Victoria Felix

H EAVEN'S dutious sunshine
waits upon her going,
And with it blends a sunshine
brighter still—
The loyal love of a great people, knowing
That building up is better than o'er-
throwing;
That Freedom lies in taming of self-will.

And with these lights about her and above
her,
She has that household joy, more rich
and rare,
Which palace-roofs, like cottage ones, may
cover—
A courteous and manly heart to love
her,
And, for her love, a line of children
fair.

With the shrill trumpets their wild war-
notes flinging,

I saw her flush under the May-day sun,
That smote the crystal arch, above her
springing,

And ran along ten thousand faces, bring-
ing

Their loyal tribute to her, every one.

And, all around, of Art and Nature's
wonders—

Those light arcades, so stretching into
space,

That faint and mellow come the organ's
thunders

To his stretched ear, whom half the long
aisle sunders

From where the Throne holdeth a central
place—

These jewels rare, in their still rarer
setting,

These trophies of a world together
brought—

All of Earth's giving, or of man's be-
getting,
By help of toiling hands, and brains a-
fretting,
Whate'er is hewn, or forged, or spun, or
wrought—

All this, she feels, is due, in no small
measure,
To him whose place is now on her right
hand—
Her husband;—and what wonder, if for
pleasure
Her eyes are full, and her heart hath small
leisure
To think of aught but him that there
doth stand,

Pale, but with thoughtful triumph in him
stirring,
That the great work with due success is
crowned;

Guiding to harmony man's efforts erring,
Pointing the world to peace, from war
deterring,
That love and joy may more and more
abound?

May 3, 1851.

The Sky-blue Song

*Suggested by ALFRED TENNYSON'S Bugle Song in
"The Princess"*

THE Milkman calls at the outer walls,
And many a maid from upper story
Comes down the stairs in the dress she wears,
In all her afternoon-tide glory.
“Oh, milk below!” sets the wild echoes flying,
“Oh, milk below!” crying, crying, crying.

Ah me, oh dear, how thin and clear,
Thinner and clearer daily growing!
I almost deem that I hear the stream
Of water into the milk-can flowing.
“Oh, milk below!” I’m surely never buying,
“Oh, milk below!” lying, lying, lying!

Oh, that is the hue of the pale sky-blue,
That's made from cistern, pump, or river ;
No cow in a field such stuff would yield,
The sight of it makes me shiver, shiver.
“Oh, milk below !” thus I send it flying—
Go, Milkman, go ! lying, lying, lying !

November 2, 1851.

The Ballad of Sir T. Tea-Leaf

IT was three gallant Chinamen,
With long tail and pig eye,
And they have sworn a solemn oath,
SIR T. TEA-LEAF must die.

And they have ta'en and flung him down
Upon an iron bed,
And underneath, with cruel hand,
Have heaped the ashes red.

They've spread him out, and pressed him
down,
And turned him o'er and o'er,
They've dried him up, until he curled,
And writhed in suffering sore.

In vain he twisted and he turned,
In vain he cried for grace ;
They kept him so, and scorched him till
He grew black in the face.

But finding he was still alive,
Their malice waxed more keen;
They dosed him first with Prussian blue
Till his poor face turned green.

What sparks of life might still remain
Determined to foredo,
They gave him next a bitter draught
Of gum and catechu.

And on his death his name they changed,
Lest men their crime should know,
And when men asked, "Who's that lies
there?"
They answered, "young PEKOE."

Whereas his name and family,
It really was SOUCHONG,
Related to the old CONGOUS,
A race both rough and strong.

Lest men should recognise his dust,
To dust when passed away,
His calcined bones they kneaded up
With lumps of China clay.

Their poison'd victim then they wrapp'd
In lead, with well-feign'd grief,
And wrote the epitaph outside,
"Here lies SIR T. TEA-LEAF."

And though their grief was all a sham,
The epitaph was true,
For "here" it said, "a TEA-LEAF lies,"
And "lie" such Tea-leaves do.

Now TEA-LEAF'S name is in repute
In lands beyond the sea,
Where maiden ladies love him much,
Under the name Green-tea.

Ah ! little dream these ancient maids
Of Chinaman's vile craft,
Nor think, while chatting o'er their cups,
There's poison in the draught.

And little know they of the fate
Poor TEA-LEAF had to dree,
Or in their teapots they would weep
Tears bitter as their tea ;

Till with the water of their woe
E'en the first brew was spiled,
And the presiding maid would be
Obliged to draw it mild !

Then to poor TEA-LEAF drop a tear,
By poison doomed to fall ;
And when there's green-tea in the pot,
May I not drink—that's all.

November 29, 1851.

Wellington

Died September 14, 1852

A LL bring their tribute to his
name—from her
Who wears the crown to him
who plies the spade
Under those windows where his corpse
is laid,
Taking its rest at last from all those years
of stir.

Years that re-moulded an old world in
roar
And furnace-fires of strife—with hideous
clang
Of battle-hammers; where they loudest
rang,
His clear sharp voice was heard that ne'er
will be heard more.

Courts have a seemly sorrow for such loss;

Cabinets politic regret: the great Will miss his punctual presence at their state—

The shade of such eclipse even lowly hearths will cross.

But I, a jester, what have I to do With greatness or the grave? The man and theme

The comment of my page may ill seem;

So be it—yet not less do I pay tribute true.

For that in him to which I would bow down

Comes not of honours heaped upon his head,

Comes not of orders on his breast out-spread—

Nor yet of captain's nor of councillor's renown.

It is that all his life example shews
Of reverence for duty: where he saw
Duty commanding word or act, her
law
With him was absolute, and brooked no
quibbling glose.

He followed where she pointed; right
ahead—
Unheeding what might sweep across his
path,
The cannon's volley, or the people's
wrath;
No hope, howe'er forlorn, but at her call
he led.

Hard as a blade so tempered needs must
be,
And, sometimes, scant of courtesy, as
one
Whose life has dealt with stern things
to be done,
Not wide in range of thought, nor deep of
subtlety:

Of most distrustful ; sparing in discourse ;
Himself untiring, and from all around
Claiming that force which in himself he
found—

He lived, and asked no love, but won
respect perforce.

And of respect, at last, came love un-
sought,

But not repelled when offered ; and we
knew

That this rare sternness had its softness
too,

That woman's charm and grace upon his
being wrought :

That underneath the armour of his breast
Were springs of tenderness—all quick
to flow

In sympathy with childhood's joy or
woe :

That children climbed his knees, and made
his arms their nest.

For fifty of its eighty years and four
His life has been before us: who but
knew
The short, spare frame, the eye of pierc-
ing blue,
The eagle-beak, the finger reared before

In greeting?—Well he bore his load of
years,
As in his daily walk he paced along
To early prayer, or, 'mid the admiring
 throng,
Pass'd through Whitehall to counsel with
his Peers.

He was true English—down to the heart's
core;
His sternness and his softness English
both:
Our reverence and love grew with his
growth,
Till we are slow to think that he can be no
more.

Peace to him ! Let him sleep near him
 who fell
 Victor at Trafalgar ; by NELSON's side
 WELLINGTON'S ashes fitly may abide.
Great captain—noble heart ! Hail to thee,
 and farewell !

September 25, 1852.

Rendering up the Sword

I

H E renders up the sword he held
so long,
And used so well for Britain :
never blade
Was freer from all tarnishing of wrong
Than England's, while his firm hand it
obeyed.

2

Old legends tell of ARTHUR'S mystic
sword
Excalibar—that never did forsake
His side, till, when death-wounded lay its
lord,
A weird hand clutched it, rising from the
lake.

3

The old ARTHUR slumbers in the enchanted
land,

The Lady of the Lake tending his sleep—
'Twas the old faith, when Britain craved
his hand,

That up to life, all harnessed, he would
leap,

4

And, baring bright Excalibar once more,
Sweep, with his shadowy knights, from
sea to sea,

Until, along the length of Britain's shore,
No foothold for an enemy should be.

5

Then back to Enchanted rest, he and his
knights

Would vanish, till a new occasion came
Rousing them from their charméd sleep's
delights,

To guard or free the land they loved from
shame.

6

So sleeps our later ARTHUR: his life's coil
 Is shuffled off—upon his bier we lay
 Trophies and tears, ere to the worms a
 spoil
 We render up his vesture of decay.

7

The dim lights burn about his gorgeous
 bier,
 Sparkling in jewelled star and pendent
 cross;
 'Scutcheons and leading staffs and blazon
 near,
 Tell to the world his honours and our
 loss.

8

The highest and the humblest of the
 land
 Are waiting to attend him to the tomb—
 The mourners go about the streets, or
 stand
 Sadly, as under sense of common doom.

Our ARTHUR sleeps—our ARTHUR is not dead.

Excalibar shall yet leap from the sheath,
Should e'er invading foot this England tread—

Upstirring, then, his marble tomb beneath,

Our WELLINGTON'S undying fire shall burn

Through all our veins—until the foemen say,

“Behold, their ARTHUR doth to life return!”

And awe-struck from the onset shrink away.

November 20, 1852.

Recollections

By the Member of a Goose Club

I PAID my shilling ! paid it like a man,
Though much my capital it did
reduce ;
But wildly my imagination ran
Upon that luscious luxury, a goose !

Yes ! I became the member of a Club—
A Goose Club ! Is it not a savoury
thought ?
But shall I win the prize ? Ah ! There's
the rub !
Or will experience be by failure bought ?

I was a member of a Goose Club ! Stay :
Let me throw water on my fever'd brow.
My brain, at the remembrance of that day,
Will be on fire. Ha ! ha ! 'tis burning
now.

Yes ! I subscrib'd my shilling ! day by
day

I asked " Has fate destin'd that I should
win ? "

At night, as tossing on my bed I lay,
I thought, " Will they give sage and
onions in ? "

At length, the Christmas feast was drawing
near ;

The issue of my lot I soon should
know :

There was a rumour, that of geese this
year

Immense would be the price, and small
the show.

The long-expected evening came at last,
The members of the Goose Club all had
met,

Lots for the "foolish bird" were to be
cast :

I feel the heart-throb of that moment
yet.

Our names were written out on paper strips,

All of the Club distinctly taken down :

JONES, TOMKINS, SPOONER, EDWARDS,

BURTON, PHIPPS,

BENDIXEN, JACKSON, OLIPHANT, and BROWN.

Ten were the members, while the goose was one—

One only was the prize: the blanks were nine.

The lucky chance could be for one alone—
I trembled as I hoped it would be mine.

As round the table anxiously we sat,

The strips of paper were together cast,
And shaken up in a policeman's hat :

My breath was thick, my pulse beat high and fast.

I seized a number, but I feared to look :

I held it in my trembling fingers loose.

Had fate awarded me a goose to cook ?

Or had misfortune rudely cook'd my goose ?

They caught the paper from my feeble
grasp,
As on my breast my throbbing temples
sank;
I gave a sidelong look—a groan—a
gasp—
A shriek—a gurgle—yes—it was a blank!

* * * * *

Since then has many a “merry Christmas”
pass’d,
And I’ve receiv’d from fortune many
a rub;
But that occasion was the first and last
When I was goose enough to join a club.

January 1, 1853.

What do the Bells say ?

THE people want gardens,
Says the bells of St
Martin's.

Townsfolk look palely,
Says the bells of Old Bailey.

Not if they're rich,
Says the bells of Shoreditch.

Then they come out to me,
Says the bells of Chel-sea.

Or with me take a bed,
Says the bells of Hampstead.

But in close London dwellings,
Says the bells of St Helen's.

How *do* they draw breath ?
Says the bells of St Faith.

Bless'd if I know,
Says the Great Bell of Bow.

December 10, 1853.

“God defend the Right!”

STIRRING our English pulses out
of their even beat,
Flushing our English faces with
an unwonted heat,
From heart and tongue, of old and young,
rises that high appeal,
To wake a might which in the fight defieth
shot and steel.

From humble homes and stately domes
that cry goes through the air,
With the loftiness of challenge, the lowli-
ness of prayer.
Honour to him who spoke the words in the
Council of the land,
To find faith in old England's heart, force
in old England's hand !

Who said that peace had eaten out the
manhood from our race?
That love of gain, and fear of pain, for
valour left no place?
That leave to spin and gold to win, was
Englishmen's sole prayer—
Which so we got it mattered not how all
besides might fare?

Back in the slanderer's throat we fling the
cold and craven words :
Never of old with manlier hold our fathers
clenched their swords ;
Never in stour of Agincourt, or Cressy's
desperate fight,
With lustier breath, defying death, rang
“God defend the right !”

Nay, all the more—that, oft of yore, when
rose that battle cry,
'Twas kingly strife that staked men's life,
nought recking “how” or “why.”

Ambition's game of sword and flame, serfs
 played as sovereigns chose,
Whose right or wrong seemed weak or
 strong, by sheer event of blows.

'Tis not so now ; the knee we bow, as those
 who, kneeling, see
That war's event is ever bent by an all-wise
 decree,
That we who fight for truth and right,
 must win, whate'er betide,
For that the God of battles goes forth upon
 our side.

That right is old which we uphold, and
 call God to defend ;
It took its birth with new-born earth, with
 out-worn earth shall end ;
Mis-shapen Wrong, however strong in
 means, in minds, in men,
Before the power of Right must cower to
 the abyss again !

What wonder then, if Englishmen are in
this faith so bold?
That each man's hand grips to the brand
his father drew of old?
What wonder that, with hearts elate, our
soldiers seek the fight,
To the great cry—from the nation's heart—
of "God defend the Right!"

March 4, 1854.

England's War Vigil

BY solemn custom in the olden time,
The squire deemed worthy to
be dubbed a knight
Kept vigil lone, from evensong
to prime,
Within the church—all in his armour
dight.

And standing reverent, or kneeling low,
For past misdeeds did Heaven's forgive-
ness pray,
And guidance ask that he might bear him so
As true knight ought—in deed and word
alway.

And, when the shadows of the night had
waned,
And while the matin mass the priests
intone,

He on the altar laid his sword unstained,
As dedicate thenceforth to God alone.

So kneels our England e'er she goeth out
A knight—to battle in a godly cause,
Humbling herself—but not as one in doubt,
If God will bless the weapon that she
draws.

She layeth down the burden of her sin,
Knowing it great, and hard to be
forgiven;
And, for the strife that she must now
begin,
Looks up for strength where true
strength is—to Heaven.

And Heaven will hear her prayer and aid
her hand,
For it is lifted to defend the weak;
To put down force and falsehood from
command,
And Heaven's own vengeance for ill
deeds to wreak.

Then stand by, selfish scoffer, with thy
sneer
Of “Cross and Crescent”—creeds to
deeds belong.
The Holy Symbol we then most revere
When we deny its power to sanction
wrong !

May 6, 1854.

The Devoted

WHO says that the heroic stirs
no longer
In this our English life :
That in rude times men's
frames and hearts were stronger,
Their souls in faith more rife ;
That luxury has sapped the deep foundation
On which alone is based
What makes a great man, and a mighty
nation ;
Till noble deed, and lofty aspiration,
Like giants, in a pigmy population,
Seem monstrous and misplaced ?

Whoso says this makes falsehood more
than truth,
Good weak, and evil strong,
Sets forceful manhood under stormy youth,
Asserts God's rule is wrong.

Our heart revolts against the withering
creed;

And though our eyes were blind,
There shines an inner light, by which we
read

It is not, and could never be decreed,
Ill should on good, not good on ill suc-
ceed—

Or woe to human kind !

And if sight fail, and if that inner light

Darkling, at times, appear,

Out of the war, where good and evil fight

(Our fainting faith to cheer),

Some champion of the Right, when
cowards fly,

Restores the battle still ;

Still rears his spotless flag against the
sky,

Still shouts aloud his glorious rallying
cry,

Still shows how soldiers of the faith can
die,

Victors o'er World and Will.

Such champions our England still has
found,
When needed, aye at hand.
Sneerer, put off thy sneer, and look
around—
Behold them where they stand!
Where storm-winds rave, and sunless
skies lie dark
About the Arctic shore,
Devoted FRANKLIN and his sailors mark,
Wrestling with death upon their ice-bound
bark,
Wandering anon—then frozen stiff, and
stark,
But suffering no more.

Look Southward now: the wounded of our
foes
Strew Alma's bloody plain,
The victors march upon the battle's close,
But one wills to remain.
A man we knew not—never thought to
know—
Who what he can will try.

Moving among that mass of pain and woe,
Upon his work of mercy, to and fro,
He used his life in succouring the foe,
Then sought his friends—to die!

I said “one willed to stay”—I was unjust;
He did not stay alone.
A soldier-servant shared the ghastly trust,—
His name, ev'n, is unknown,
And there in faith, and love and duty
strong,
Among that writhing host
Of enemies, all day and all night long,
Defying chance of violence or wrong,
To entomb the dead, and help the living
throng—
These two men held their post!

Nor to men only such heroic mould
Of heart is given.
See yonder band of women—young and
old—
No nuns, yet brides of Heaven;
Forsaking all that to their sex is dear—
Some, wealth—all, home and ease—

Womanly pity chasing woman's fear,
They go to bind lopped limbs, pale heads
 to rear,
And with soft touch, and softer speech to
 cheer
 Our sufferers o'er the seas !

If England have aught good, 'tis that she
 knows
 Due reverence to give
To those who die in duty's work, and those
 For duty's work who live.
Grieving for all that these great dead have
 borne,
 All these great living bear,
We know they die and suffer, to adorn
Life with examples—such as, though we
 mourn,
In our hearts and our children's shall be
 worn
 While men breathe English air !

November 11, 1854.

Dagon

The Emperor Nicholas died on March 2, 1855

SMITTEN — as by lightning —
smitten
Down, amid his armed array ;
With the fiery scroll scarce
written
Bidding myriads to the fray ;
There—but yesterday defying
Europe's banners, linked and flying
For her freedom—see him lying—
Earth's Colossus—earth's own clay.
But no triumph-shout be given,
Knee to earth and eye to heaven !
God hath judged the day.

Ark of freedom ! Lightly spoken
Vows to thee vain kings have said,
Many an oath thy priests have broken,
Many a fight thy guards have fled :

But thine ancient Consecration,
Sealed so oft by stern libation,
Lifeblood of a struggling nation,
In thy foeman's doom is read.
Still, O Ark ! the hand that gave thee
Strikes, in peril's hour, to save thee—
There lies Dagon—dead !

March 10, 1855.

Mrs Durden's Annual Troubles

WELL! here's my plagues come back again—the usual torment of the season,

Them nasty good-for-nothing flies—I can't think what can be the reason.

In course such things is sent to try and punish us for our transgressions!

To think that books—oh! all my eye—is wrote to prove the varmint blessin's!

Bother your nasty snails and slugs, and what you call your recreations—

In Natural History, fleas and bugs, and insects and their habitations,

Inhabiting our ticks and beds, where
there's no means of getting at 'em.
What can there be in people's heads to
like such nasty things ? ah, drat 'em !

Your cockchafers, and grubs, and worms,
your palmers and your caterpillars,
And what's the use of Latin terms for
good-for-nothing moths and millers ?
Which in the candle always flies, and
serve 'em right, although they suffers ;
But then it gutters whilst they fries, and
so I kills 'em with the snuffers.

Their homes and haunts, indeed ! I know
too well what places they infestes ;
They burrows in my brockilo, and in my
cabbage makes their nestes.
They winds their ways, and lays their eggs,
and frets, and ferrets, and deposits
Their nits in cloths on all my pegs, in all
my trunks, and drawers, and closets.

Bluebottles, I am quite aware, about my
safes and larder buzzes,
Left open by the want of care of inat-
tentive thoughtless hussies.
Blackbeetles on the kitchen floor, and
cockroaches, all night are sprawling,
From underneath the cupboard door, or
from behind the dresser crawling.

A hole somewhere behind the grate, I take
it, is the cricket's quarters,
Where they goes on at such a rate a-chir-
ruping at night—the Tartars !
In windows and on ceilings both the
daddy-longlegs fix his station,
And is a sign of shameful sloth whichever
is his situation.

I know that mites inhabits cheese, and
hams is where we meets with hoppers,
I know likewise that straw breeds fleas ;
thatch'd cottages is full of whoppers ;

All that I know, and that's enough; I want
to know no more about 'em,
Unless it is what pison stuff is the best
kind of thing to rout 'em.

Maggots in filbert nuts is found, and
apples also is their dwelling,
Wopsis in plums and pears abound, and
stings, which cause a dreadful
swelling;
Talk of the good which they fulfills!—I
don't believe a word or letter,
What I say is, the more you kill of
enemies like them, the better.

They plaguy things was made to eat our
refuge, lecture-teachers tell us;
Rubbidge! they comes to taint our meat.
—If we was to believe them fellows,
The blow-flies we should leave alone,
and let the spiders live to eat 'em,
And be with cobwebs overgrown; a pretty
way to treat 'em.

Servants would have a fine excuse, dusters
and brooms for not employing—
If sitch like creturs was of use, and there-
fore didn't want destroying—
I sweeps 'em down, and hunts 'em out
with every kind of persecutions,
And cresh and trembles 'em without more
pity than I would the Rooshians.

September 8, 1855.

Florence Nightingale

THE floating froth of public praise
blown lightly by each ran-
dom gust,
Settles on trophies, bright for
days, to lapse in centuries of rust.

The public heart, that will be fed; but has
no art its food to choose,
Grasps what comes readiest, stones for
bread, rather than fast, will not refuse.

Hence hero-worship's hungry haste takes
meanest idols, tawdriest shrines,
Where CARDIGAN struts, plumed and laced,
or HUDSON in brass lacquer shines.

Yet when on top of common breaths a truly
glorious name is flung,
Scorn not because so many wreaths before
unworthiest shrines are hung.

The people, howe'er wild or weak, have
noble instincts still to guide :

Oft find false gods, when true they seek ;
but true, once found, have ne'er denied.

And now, for all that's ill-bestow'd or rash
in popular applause,

Deep and true England's heart has glow'd
in this great woman's holy cause.

Her cause, who—when misrule had brought
plague, famine, nakedness, despair

Upon our host, when men distraught,
aghast, went groping here and there.

When all that wounds have ghastliest,
worst, all sickness has most fierce and
foul,

Lay heap'd pell-mell unfed, a-thirst, to groan
and rave, and curse and howl.

When England, mad with piteous wrath,
but not less impotent to save,

Saw her great army take its path, slowly,
to an inglorious grave—

Stept calm and humble to the front, a young
and saintly volunteer,
And—as those maiden martyrs wont, whose
name the Church doth still revere,

Who in the arena for their faith did rage of
ravering beast confront—
She, face to face with pain and death, bore
bravely a worse battle's brunt

Than any soldier of all there who on their
bloody pallets cast,
Too thick for speech, but not for care, could
kiss her shadow as she past.

Upon the darkness of the night how often,
gliding late and lone,
Her little lamp, hope's beacon-light, to eyes
with no hope else has shone !

Nor stood she single—that true heart
attracted kindred hearts, a band.
That with her chose the better part—young
—gentle—ladies of the land :

Who through those miles of wretchedness
wrought with her both by night and
day ;

And blessing, bred of gentleness, went with
them ever on their way,

Falling like balm on passion wrung from
festering wound or fever-pain,

Checking the foul word on the tongue,
calming the fierce thought in the brain ;

Till all about those crowded wards a
gradual gracious change befell,

Some holy influence bringing guards of
Heaven, where, till they came, was Hell.

And with that gentleness such strength,
wisdom, and force of will were blent,
That chafed authority at length, obey'd her
rule and was content.

So she and they, her sisters true, blessing
and blest, gave loving care,

Till Order out of Chaos grew, and Hope
was kindled from Despair.

For service such as this, what meed?
What trophy can the people raise
That shall not fall below the need? What
tongue or pen shall reach her praise?

December 8, 1855.

Poem by a Perfectly Furious Academician

I TAKES and paints,
Hears no complaints,
And sells before I'm dry ;
Till savage RUSKIN
He sticks his tusk in,
Then nobody will buy.

N.B.—Confound RUSKIN ; only that won't come into the poetry—but it's true.

May 24, 1856.

The Nightingale's Return

MOST blessed things come silently, and silently depart ;
Noiseless steals spring-time on the year, and comfort on the heart ;
And still, and light, and gentle, like a dew,
the rain must be,
To quicken seed in furrow and blossom upon tree.

Nile has his foaming rapids, freshes from mountain snows ;
But where his stream breeds fruitfulness, serene and calm it flows ;
And when he over-brims, to cheer his banks on either side,
You scarce can mark, so gradual, the swelling of his tide.

The wings of angels make no stir, as they
 ply their works of love ;
But by the balm they shed around, we
 know them that they move.
God spake not in the thunder, nor the
 mighty rushing blast ;
His utterance was in the still small voice,
 that came at last.

So she, our sweet Saint FLORENCE, modest,
 and still, and calm,
With no parade of martyr's cross, no pomp
 of martyr's palm,
To the place of plague and famine, foulness,
 and wounds, and pain,
Went out upon her gracious toil, and so
 returns again.

No shouting crowds about her path, no
 multitudes' hot breath,
To feed with wind of vanity the doubtful
 fires of faith ;

Her paths by hands official all unsmoothed,
her aims decried

By the Levites, who, when need was, passed
on the other side.

When titles, pensions, orders, with random
hand are showered,

'Tis well that, save with blessings, she still
should walk undowered.

What title like her own sweet name, with
the music all its own?

What order like the halo by her good deeds
round her thrown?

Like her own bird—all voiceless while the
daylight songsters trill,

Sweet singer in the darkness when all
songs else are still—

She on that night of suff'ring that chilled
other hearts to stone,

Came with soft step and gentle speech, yet
wise and firm of tone.

Think of the prayers for her, that to the
praying heart came back,
In rain of blessings, seeming still to spring
upon her track :
The comfort of her graciousness to those
whose road to death
Was dark and doubtful, till she showed the
light of love and faith.

Then leave her to the quiet she has chosen :
she demands
No greeting from our brazen throats and
vulgar clapping hands.
Leave her to the still comfort the Saints
know that have striven.
What are our earthly honours ? Her
honours are in Heaven.

August 23, 1856.

Canzonet on Crinoline

By a Wretch

WHEN lovely woman, hooped
 in folly,
Grows more expansive
 every day,
And makes her husband melancholy
 To think what bills he'll have to pay :

When in the width of fashion swelling
 With air-balloons her skirts may vie,
The truth—(what hinders *Punch* from
 telling ?)
Is that she looks a perfect—Guy !

February 21, 1857

Y^e Vnsettled Accompt

A Lay of High Life

“ **N**OW, marry, LADY FEATHER-
HEAD, I say it is too bad,
It is, now, by my halidom,
enough to drive one mad !
This bill—this heavy bill, sent in from
MOSLYN, CRAPE AND CO.—
Methought that ye had settled it at least
three years ago !”

“ La, you there, what a pother makes my
Lord ! look how he raves !
I wot that **MOSLYN, CRAPE AND CO.** are base
and sorry knaves.
And they shall wait for that same bill until
I list to pay,
And give me credit, or I will their credit
take away.”

“Their credit is past marring, Madam ;
credit they have none—
They are ruined, MOSLYN, CRAPE AND Co. ;
they have failed : their job is done.
They are bankrupts now, my Lady, and
this bill, which foul fiends seize !
Now must I, will-I, nill-I, pay unto their
assignees.”

“A scurvy sort of fellows in such plaguy
wise to fail !
I hope the caitiffs will be shent, an they
be not in gaol,
Bankrupts, forsooth ! and why did they
not mind what they were at ?
How, marry, came they so to break—to
work so ill as that ?”

“How, marry, Madam ? marry, why be-
cause they were not paid.
Bills, Madam, bills like this have been
the ruin of their trade.

Their creditors come down on me, to pay
it I have got;
Which ye should whilom long have done
—and wherefore did ye not?"

"Be not in such a rage, my Lord; what
boot to storm and fret?
So many things have happened since, in
sooth, that I forget.
The wherefore, for the life of me, I truly
cannot say;
But one thing seemeth clear enough—I
somehow did not pay."

"Yea, but ye had the money, I remember
me right well,
For grief it was and pain to me so great
a sum to tell;
And now I must endure that grief and
undergo that pain,
Of shelling that enormous sum of money
out again."

“Tush, tilly-vally, good my Lord ! heed not
a little cost ;
The money hath been spent, I trow ; so
none thereof is lost.
Needs must we do as others do, and dress
as others dress,
Which, certes, were not to be done and
cost a penny less.”

“Out on your silks and sarcenet-stuffs,
your trinkets and your toys,
A murrain upon taffetas, a pest on
paduasoys,
The dyvel take your satins and likewise
your bombazines,
And furbelows and flounces all, and skirts,
and Crinolines.”

“Nay, fair and softly, FEATHERHEAD, be-
think yourself, I pray,
One may not out of fashion be, or what
would people say ?

An it were not for that, in faith, right little
should I care,
And seldom run up any bills like those
whereat ye swear."

"What matters it what people say? Consider how ye use,
Ever, behind each other's backs each other
to abuse.
To please the world ye seek in vain, I
wish ye would, therefore,
Throw less away to pleasure it, and please
your husbands more."

"Gramercy what a fuss is here about a bill
unpaid,
And a linendraper's shop shut up—a
common thing in trade!
Much more upon this matter is your Lord-
ship fain to say?
I wis my carriage waiteth—is your speech
to last all day?"

“ Now dash my coronet!—this is beyond
what man may stand ;
By the battle-axe of my ancestors ! by my
fay ! by this right hand !
Ha ! say you so, my Lady ? Well, then,
I’ll do I know what—
I’ll advertise all tradesmen that—like me
—they trust you not.”

May 28, 1857.

Douglas Jerrold

Died June 8th, 1857

LOW lies the lion-like grey head ;
The broad and bright blue eye
is glazed :
Quenched is that flashing wit,
which blazed,
The words that woke it scarcely said.

Those who but read the writer's word,
Might deem him bitter : we that knew
The man, all saw the sword he drew
In tongue-fence, was both shield and
sword.

That sword, in the world's battle-throng,
Was never drawn upon the meek :
Its skill to guard was for the weak,
Its strength to smite was for the strong.

His sympathy was ever given
Where need for it was sorest felt :
In pity that blue eye would melt,
Which against wrong, blazed like the levin.

Not for his wit, though it was rare ;
Not for his pen, though it was keen ;
We sorrow for his loss, and lean
Lovingly over that grey hair,

To place the wreath, befitting those
Who like good men and true have striven ;
By God, not man, he must be shriven ;
Men guess and grope : God sees and
knows.

June 20, 1857.

The Star of Valour

*Distributed by the Queen's own Hand
June 26, 1857*

A RIFT is made in that dark shade
Which o'er our soldiers flung its blight,
And through the shroud of its cold cloud,
The Star of Valour throws a light.

Low-born and noble, side by side,
Colonel and private, stand to-day :
Their comrades' boast, their country's pride,
Where all were brave, the bravest they !

The fount of Honour, sealed till now
To all save claims of rank and birth,
Makes green the laurel on the brow,
Ennobled but by soldier's worth.

The QUEEN'S own hand, on each brave
breast—

Beat it 'neath serge or superfine—
Hangs the plain cross, whose bronze, so
prest,
Beameth with more than diamond's
shine.

That bronze, cast from the steadfast guns,
Which blazed along the red Redan,
Whose maddening music, while it stuns
The coward, only wakes the man.

From whose hot muzzles was plucked
forth,
The fame, their metal now rewards
In these plumed warriors of the North,
These Sailors, Rifles, Linesmen, Guards.

These Heavy Horsemen who rode out,
Stern and sedate, though one to ten :
Then, through the Russian line in rout,
Stern and sedate, rode back again.

And these Light Horse—of deathless name,
Who charged, unquestioning of their
doom,
Through those long miles all fire and flame,
And at the end, a soldier's tomb !

Of these the bravest and the best
Who 'scaped the chance of shot and
sword,
England doth, by her QUEEN, invest
With Valour's Cross—their great reward !

Marking her sense of something, still,
A central nobleness, that lies
Deeper than rank which royal will,
Or birth, or chance, or wealth supplies.

Knighthood that girds all valiant hearts,
Knighthood that crowns each fearless
brow ;
That Knighthood this bronze cross
imparts—
Let Fleece, and Bath, and Garter bow !

July 4, 1857.

The Song of the House

WITH patience threadbare
worn,
With eyelids heavy as lead,
A Member sat in the Com-
mons' House
When he ought to have been in bed.
Sit! sit! sit!
In dog-days, small-hours and frowse,
And as his place he couldn't quit,
He sang the song of the House.

“Talk! talk! talk!
In the morning from twelve till four!
And talk! talk! talk!
At evening for eight hours more!
It's, oh, to be a slave
At words instead of work,
With GLADSTONE and PAM for Fox and PITTR,
And BETHELL instead of BURKE!

“Talk ! talk ! talk !
Till the painted windows swim ;
Talk ! talk ! talk !
Till the lights in the roof wax dim !
Clause and section and line—
Line and section and clause—
Till on the benches we fall asleep,
And dream of making laws.

“Oh, men, with incomes clear,
Oh, men, with houses and wives,
What fools we are to be stewing here,
When we might lead easy lives !
Stick ! stick ! stick !
In the stench of the bone-boilers' dirt ;
To hear GLADSTONE'S taunts at BETHELL,
And BETHELL'S rejoinders pert !

“Talk ! talk ! talk !
Our labour lasts night and day :
And what are its wages — nothing a-
year,
And election bills to pay ;

The right to stand on this matted floor,
The right to address that chair,
And the *Times* a blank—for I'm not of the
rank
To be reported there.

“Sit! sit! sit!
From weary chime to chime;
Sit! sit! sit!
And to miss a division's a crime.
Amend, divide, and report—
Report, divide, and amend—
Till each section's a riddle, the Act a maze
And a muddle from end to end.

“Talk! talk! talk!
In the blazing midsummer light;
Talk! talk! talk!
Through the sweltering midsummer
night:
While all about the House
The bone-boilers' odours cling,
To mock us with dreams of the heathery hills,
Where the grouse are on the wing!

“Oh ! but to breathe the breath
 Of the heather and gorse so sweet,
With my wide-awake on my head,
 And my luncheon at my feet !
For only one short hour
 To feel as I used to feel,
After a morning’s blaze at the birds,
 For an appetite for my meal !”

With patience threadbare worn,
 With eyelids heavy as lead,
A Member sat in the Commons’ House
 When he fain would have been in bed.
Sit ! sit ! sit !
 In dog-days, small-hours and frowse,
And as the debate he couldn’t quit,
 He tried to make the best of it,
By singing the Song of the House !

August 22, 1857.

Liberavimus Animam

WHO pules about mercy? The agonised wail
Of babies hewn piecemeal yet sickens the air,
And echoes still shudder that caught on the gale
The mother's—the maiden's wild scream of despair.

Who pules about mercy? That word may be said
When steel, red, and sated, perforce must retire,
And for every soft hair of each dearly loved head
A cord has dispatched a foul fiend to hell-fire.

The Avengers are marching—fierce eyes
in a glow:

Too vengeful for curses are lips locked
like those—

But hearts hold two prayers—to come up
with the foe,

And to hear the proud blast that gives
signal to close.

And woe to the hell-hounds! Right well
may they fear

A vengeance—ay darker than war ever
knew,

When Englishmen, charging, exchange
the old cheer

For “REMEMBER THE WOMEN AND
BABES WHOM THEY SLEW.”

Who slanders our brave ones? What,
puling again!

You “fear for the helpless when left as
a prey;

Should the females, the innocent children
be slain,
Or outraged——” Away with your slanders,
away !

Our swords come for slaughter ; they come
in the name
Of Justice ; and sternly their work shall
be done :
And a world, now indignant, behold with
acclaim
That hecatomb, slain in the face of the
sun.

And terrified India shall tell to all
time
How Englishmen paid her for murder
and lust ;
And stained not their fame with one spot
of the crime
That brought the rich splendour of Delhi
to dust.

But woe to the hell-hounds! Their enemies
know

Who hath said to the soldier that fights
in His name—

“THY FOOT SHALL BE DIPPED IN THE
BLOOD OF THY FOE,
AND THE TONGUE OF THY DOGS SHALL
BE RED THROUGH THE SAME.”

September 12, 1857.

A Vision of Siren Soup

THE Alderman woke from his nightmare, howling a terrible cry:

Punched his wife's face with his elbow: at morning she had a black eye:

Started the lady in terror, giving a species of scream,

And this was old BLOGGS's apology, this, the account of his dream:—

“SALLY, I’m blest if our SAMMY, next time he comes home from school,

Tells them there stories at supper, I’ll take and I’ll wop the young fool.

What was his call for relating things that I’ll swear isn’t fax,

How MR WHATSHISNAME bunged up the ears of them sailors with wax.

"How them young females like mermaids
had petticoats all made of scales:
The schoolmasters ought to be towelled
for filling boy's heads with such tales,
And how they sang songs for seducing
the crews of the ships as they passed,
And this cove kept himself from their
clutches by getting tied up to a mast.

"I suppose as I mixed up together SAM'S
anecdotes touching them drabs
With my sausages, kidney, Welsh rabbit,
Scotch ale, scolloped oysters, and
crabs,
Or whatever beside I'd for supper, a
meal that no Alderman misses,
And I dreamt, SAL, as I was the party—
the name I remember—ULYSSES.

"I dreamt I were sailing the ocean, enjoy-
ing the motion uncommon
'You know what I'd soon a-been doing at
sea, was I wakin', old 'oman)

And what did I see on a rock (it's as true
as the sermon in church),
Why, one of the liveliest turtles as ever
flapped fin at old BIRCH.

“But, SAL, he worn’t laying discreet, like
a babe with a shell for its bed,
A waiting with proper decorum till some-
body cut off his head ;
But with him a codfish and wenison, all
balancing upon their end,
And playing on music, and calling me, just
as if I was their friend.

“‘Nice kind of impudent critters,’ says I
to a sailor or two ;
‘I’ll just take a swim to them rocks, and
astonish the rascals a few ;’
Just fancy me saying it, SALLY, and talk-
ing of swimming so fine,
That haven’t once taken a bath since the
year 1809.

“And by GOG I were going to do it, regard-
less of wetting my togs,
The wittles kep bleating and crying:
‘Come here, MR ALDERMAN BLOGGS!’
When the sailors they clutched at my
collar, with knuckles so bony and big,
And held me as tight as policemen keep
hold of a slippery prig.

“It was no use my bawling and scolding,
for just at that minute again
That SAMMY’S infernal description came
back to bewilder my brain:
Their ears were all full of red sealing-wax
—some one had dropped it in hot,
And sealed it with dominy dirrijee—what’s
on the Mayor’s silver pot.

“Then all the three impudent critters they
plopped all at once in the sea,
And with their windictive mouths open,
came swimming to get hold of me,

And making all queer kind of noises, they
swarmed up the side of the boat,
And I felt their wet flappers and noses
beginning to get at my throat.

“So then I bawled out in my terror, the
thing having got past a joke,
And striking out fiercely at random, I’m
happy to say as I woke.”
To all which instructive narration his
Lady vouchsafed no reply ;
But with what she called Odour-Cologney
sat sulkily dabbing her eye.

October 3, 1857.

Havelock

HE is gone. Heaven's will
is best:
Indian turf o'erlies his
breast.

Ghoul in black, nor fool in gold
Laid him in yon hallowed mould.
Guarded to a soldier's grave
By the bravest of the brave,
He hath gained a nobler tomb
Than in old Cathedral gloom,
Nobler mourners paid the rite
Than the crowd that craves a sight,
England's banners o'er him waved—
Dead, he keeps the realm he saved.

Strew not on the hero's hearse
Garlands of a herald's verse :
Let us hear no words of Fame
Sounding loud a deathless name :

Tell us of no vauntful Glory
Shouting forth her haughty story.
All life long his homage rose
To far other shrine than those.
“*In Hoc Signo*,” pale nor dim,
Lit the battle-field for him,
And the prize he sought and won,
Was the Crown for Duty done.

January 16, 1858.

The Music of Nature

WHEN we are out upon the hills,
'Tis sweet to list to rural sounds ;
A mingled noise of purling rills,
Of lowing kine, and baying hounds,
And many a small bird's mingled song
Arises from the vale below ;
Unless perchance the wind is wrong,
And from our ears the sound should blow.

We note the crowing of the cock,
We mark the steed's far distant neigh,
We hear the bleating of the flock,
And donkey after donkey bray.
All these are common notes 'tis true,
Which humble instruments produce,
Yet are they sweet to listen to ;
And there's the cackle of the goose :

The duck, too, lends her tuneful quack,
 To swell the music of the vale,
The mill supplies its ceaseless clack :
 Add songs that smack of too much ale.
All these are sounds remembered well,
 And o'er the memory oft they ring ;
On such the Poet loves to dwell,
 When he invokes the Muse to sing.

But oh ! there is one simple sound,
 Amid the rustic symphony,
That never yet hath poet found,
 Most sweet, most striking though it be.
It is a pleasing cry of pain,
 First loud and strong, then soft and weak,
Which language to describe is vain—
 The dying pig's perpetual squeak.

January 16, 1858.

The Happy Man

A GAIN is JOHNSON'S knocker
muted,
Warning postman, milk-
man, tramp ;
Once more hath he been saluted
By that dear old *Sarey Gamp*.
At his window chirp the sparrows,
JOHNSON happiest of Men !
With his quiver full of arrows,
The tallest rising two foot ten.

At his Club now pensive dining,
JOHNSON views his ways and means,
Home tranquillity resigning
Until JANE the Cherub weans.
In due time the midnight chamber
With his little charge he'll pace ;
A meerschaum may be tipp'd with amber
Pointing from his quiet face.

Visions to his mind are rising,
Long Apothecary's bills ;
French and music—friends surprising,
Socks and boots and tiny frills.
For relief of beings tender,
One horse now must serve for two :
Golf-stick—that he must surrender ;
Whitebait—certainly eschew.

Ye who jest at love's intrusions,
Listen gravely, if you can ;
Mock not JOHNSON'S sweet illusions,
Wondrous are the joys of Man !
Better far to own a bright house,
Lit with twinkling lamps all o'er,
Than to dwell in lonely light-house,
With no soft glove-knocker'd door.

January 16, 1858.

Franklin

THE Polar clouds uplift—
A moment and no more—
And through the snowy
drift,
We see them on the shore—

A band of gallant hearts,
Well-ordered, calm, and brave ;
Braced for their closing parts—
Their long march to the grave.

Through the snow's dazzling blink,
Into the dark they've gone.
No pause : the weaker sink,
The strong can but strive on.

Till all the dreary way
Is dotted with their dead :
And the shy foxes play
About each sleeping head.

Unharmed the wild deer run,
To graze along the strand :
Nor dread the loaded gun
Beside each sleeping hand.

The remnant that survive
Onward like drunkards reel ;
Scarce wotting if alive,
But for the pangs they feel.

The river of their hope
At length is drawing nigh—
Their snow-blind way they grope,
And reach its banks to die !

Thank God : brave FRANKLIN'S place
Was empty in that band.
He closed his well-run race
Not on the iron strand.

Not under snow-clouds white,
By cutting frost-wind driven,
Did his true spirit fight
Its shuddering way to Heaven.

But warm, aboard his ship,
With comfort at his side,
And hope upon his lip,
The gallant FRANKLIN died.

His heart ne'er ached to see
His much loved sailors ta'en ;
His sailors' pangs were free
From their loved captain's pain.

But though in death apart,
They are together now ;
Calm, each enduring heart—
Bright, each devoted brow !

October 8, 1859.

A C Song

Inscribed to SIGNOR TAMBERLIK after a hearing of his famous "ut de poitrine"

THE C ! the C ! the open C !
That cometh from the chest so
free ;
'Tis cheering to hear that high
clear sound,
How it filleth the house, above, around.
It rings through the stalls, to the pit it
flies,
And e'en to the back of the gallery hies.
I love the C, the high chest C,
'Tis a tone above SIMS REEVES his B ;
It would puzzle GIUGLINI so high to go,
And it taketh the shine out of MARIO.
Though a storm in the chorus and band
there be,
What matter their clatter ? they ne'er can
drown the C !

I love, O how I love to dwell
In thought on the glories of *William Tell* :
Where the shining lake and the silver
 moon
Seem to harmonise well with each soft
 sweet tune ;
When TELL'S voice is heard in that grand
 tri-o,
And the chorus come trooping from high
 and low.
I'm fond of HERR FORMES' deep bass roar,
But I love the high C more, far more,
As upward it soareth as clear from the
 chest
As the nightingale's singing to cheer its
 nest.
And a wonder it always hath been to me,
How a tenor can touch that high chest C.

The vibrato style I hear with scorn,
In nervousness or weak lungs 'twas born :
And I hate the falsetto, although I'm
 told
That by it RUBINI made pecks of gold.

Mere quivers and quavers to me sound
mild,
But the high chest C just suits this child ;
It stirreth the soul, and it quickens to life,
All the pulses that vibrate to love or strife.
I have wealth to spend, I have power to
range,
But from *Tell* at the *Garden* I wish no change ;
And if ARNOLD ever should call on me,
I'll get him to sing me his high chest C !

May 25, 1861.

Albert

Died December Fourteenth, 1861

HOW should the Princes die?
With red spur deep in
maddening charger's flank,
Leading the rush that cleaves
the foemen's rank,
And shouting some time-famous battle-
cry?

Ending a pleasure day,
Joy's painted goblet fully drained, and
out,
While wearied vassals coldly stand
about,
And con new homage which they long to
pay?

So have the Princes died.

Nobler and happier far the fate that falls

On Him who 'mid yon aged Castle walls,
Hears, as he goes, the splash of Thames's
tide.

Gallant, high-natured, brave,
O, had his lot been cast in warrior days,
No nobler knight had won the minstrel's
praise,
Than he, for whom the half-reared banners
wave.

Or, graced with gentler powers,
The song, the pencil, and the lyre his
own,
Deigned he to live fair pleasure's thrall
alone,
None had more lightly sped the laughing
hours.

Better and nobler fate
His, whom we claimed but yesterday,
His, ours no more, his, round whose
sacred clay,
The death-mute pages and the heralds
wait.

It was too soon to die.

Yet, might we count his years by
triumphs won,

By wise, and bold, and Christian duties
done,

It were no brief eventless history.

This was his princely thought:

With all his varied wisdom to repay
Our trust and love, which on that Bridal
Day

The Daughter of the Isles for dowry
brought.

For that he loved our QUEEN,

And, for her sake, the people of her love,
Few and far distant names shall rank
above

His own, where England's cherished
names are seen.

Could there be closer tie

'Twixt us, who, sorrowing, own a nation's
debt

And Her, our own dear Lady, who as
yet
Must meet her sudden woe with tearless
eye :

When with a kind relief
Those eyes rain tears, O might this
thought employ !
Him whom she loved we loved. We
shared her joy,
And will not be denied to share her grief.

December 21, 1861.

A Sorry Christmas, 1861

I COME again—your hoary King !
My crown of ivy green and beaded
holly,—
My wonted crown—behold I bring,
My wonted Christmas-Carol sing,
Wooing to joy e'en blackest melancholy ;
I lift my wassail-cup
With spiced drink mantling up—
But ah, my crown looks sere,
My Carols grate upon the ear,
My wassail-healths sound wantonness and
folly.

A blight lies on the iron earth,
A dark cloud hides the lowering heaven :
'Tis not the thought of winter-dearth,
Huddled beside a fireless hearth,
Hushing its thin brood till the bread is
given :

To woes and wants like these
I can bring ready ease,
With good-will and good-cheer
Can warm and raise the dying year,
But this is gloom not all my mirth can
leaven.

“PEACE UPON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MAN,”
My charter who among you but
remembers?
I that should bless, how shall I ban?
I that the fires of love should fan,
How shall I stir to flame hate’s smoulder-
ing embers?
How dye with deeper red
The holly round my head,
How change my carol sweet
To war-cry, for my throat unmeet,
How bid war’s horror wed with drear
December’s?

“PEACE UPON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO ALL,”
And if good will to *all*, what to *our brother*?

Oh, may the lifted weapons fall,
And Peace's gentle call
Pierce through the trumpets that her
pleading smother?
May better thoughts ensue,
Wrong-doers wrongs undo,
Till breaks the war-cloud dun,
And bursts God's blessed winter sun,
To show two hands, disarm'd, clasping
each other.

December 28, 1861.

Lines for Music

THE dædal fanes of rosy light
Are clinging round the
amber dawn,
And crimson isles of verdure
bright

Lie bathed in odour freshly drawn.
The vesper fire of vernal touch
Ascends with star-like foot the snow,
While hearts of gold that love too much
Are cradled fair in sleep below.

Undying crimson swells and curls
O'er limpid wild and lustrous bay,
And shower on shower of crystal pearls
On music's pinions glide and stray.
From fairy harps the faintest string
Is reft to deck thy golden hair,
And Beauty's own eternal spring
With sweeter pang is quivering there.

December 27, 1862.

The Lesson of the Year 1862

“**G**o hence, ill Year, with robes
that reek of war,
Hands that struck down the
labour of our North ;
My curse go after thee beyond the
door
That darkens at thy ghastly going
forth.

“Away, foul beldame ! give the Young
Year room,
What he is like none who await him
know ;
At worst his looks will mend thy face of
doom,
Worse year than thou, the world can
never know.”

The Old Year on the threshold paused and turned,
Red stains were thick upon the shroud she wore,
An awful light in the sunk eye-balls glared
That looked upon me from the darkened door.

And thin and hollow-sounding, as from far,
A voice came to me, sad at once and stern:
“Who art thou, that arraign’st at thy blind bar
The Power who guides the million orbs that burn

“About this sphere, where thy poor life is past,
Ephemeral, in ephemeral grief or glee,
That ban and blessing, like a child, dares’t cast,
On years that owe not an account to thee?

“God’s chastisements and bounties is it
thine

To measure with *thy* staff; weigh with
thy brains?

I work *His* bidding: *His* the will not mine;
Know I how ill dies out, and good
remains?

“But ev’n with reverent judgment, meet
for man,

Marking the doings of the twelve months
gone,

The root of blessing in my bitterest ban
Methinks e’en thy poor wisdom might
have known.

“From civil war’s high-heaped and fester-
ing grave,

By means unguessed of those who fight
or rule,

Grows, slow but sure, the freedom of the
slave,

While human foresight gapes, a baffled
fool.

“In War’s rude gripe, what lies, which stoutest thrust
Of Peace, and all her train, could never shake,
Are shattered into rottenness and dust—
What powers of unguessed nobleness awake!

“What lessons are made clear by War’s red light
To those who fight and those who watch the strife!
Out of the soil swept bare by battle’s blight
What seeds of new strength sudden leap to life!

“For cotton-dearth, with pain and misery rife,
The blessing hidden in it all must own,
Who see how suffering calls love to life,
How of endurance comes a strength unknown.

**"Then curse me not, but bless me; there
is balm
For every bruise that God inflicts on
earth;
His ways are in the storm, as in the calm,
In war and misery, as in peace and mirth."**

January 10, 1863.

Nursery Rhymes

*(To be continued until every Town in the Kingdom has
been immortalised)*

THERE was a young lady of Poole,
Who thought she would set up a school;
But all she could teach Were the nine parts of speech,
And how to make gooseberry fool.

There was a young lady of Deal,
Who ate up five platefuls of veal,
A sausage, and ham,
And some raspberry jam,
And said, "I have made a good meal."

There was a young lady of Skye,
Who declared she was going to die,

But was instantly cured
When politely assured
If she did, there was no one would cry.

There was a young lady of Oakham,
Who would steal your cigars and then
soak 'em
In treacle and rum,
And then smear them with gum ;
So it wasn't a pleasure to smoke 'em.

There was a young lady of Crewe,
Whose eyes were excessively blue ;
So she got an old fellow
To rub them with yellow,
And so they turned green ; which is true.

There was a young lady of Cirencester,
She went to consult a solicitor,
When he wanted his fee,
She said " Fiddledeedee,
I only looked in as a visitor."

January 10, 1863.

England's Welcome to Alexandra

WEDDED life its gate uncloses,
Fond and fair, towards it move,
O'er a pathway strewed with roses,
In the light of youth and love !
Prayers of those that lose thee blending
With our welcome-cheers ascending,—
Gracious as thou art—
England's loyalty upholds thee,
England's hope and heir enfolds thee
To a husband's heart.

Nor only living loves, oh Prince, entwine,—
The QUEEN'S, the People's—round this act
of thine :
The father, lost to us and her and thee,
Blesses the day he should have lived to see,

And bending from the heaven where he is
now,
Breathes a new radiance o'er thy virgin
brow,
Fair Princess, that across the Northern
main,
Com'st to reknit crown'd wedlock's broken
chain.

In their Valhalla lo ! the Vikingr dead,
Drain the deep mead-horns to the Danish
Maid.

Thinking to song of shield and dance of
glaive,

How those sea-dragons bore them o'er the
wave,

That now convoy this Northern rose-bud's
charms

From Denmark's parting-clasp to Eng-
land's arms,

The while their High-Scald sweeps the
golden string,

The Maid of Denmark's bridal voyage to
sing :—

The Vikingr of old
Swept o'er the salt spray,
With the black raven flying,
To swoop on the prey ;
The grange lay in ashes,
And empty the fold,
On the war-wasted path
Of the Vikingr of old !

The Viking sea-dragons
Seek England again,
But far other the freight
That they bear o'er the main ;
A Dove is their ensign,
And, 'neath its white fold,
Comes the golden-haired child
Of the Vikingr of old.

March 7, 1863.

Hush ! was that Thunder ?

AS when a quivering Summer day is drawing to a close,
And the Sun is lighting up with flames cloud-mountain-s where he rose,
And the air is hot and wandering, and silence holds her reign,
When men do stop and gaze aloft,—and then hurry on again—
And the trembling murmur whispered along the vaulted sky
Is the signal for the clouds to ope their dread artillery—
So now a storm is gathering with the darkness of the time,
And its magnitude is all that will make it seem sublime ;

It still is out of ear-shot, but we see its
lightnings gleam,—
It is coming—and the thunderings are
nearer than they seem—
Each nation gazes upwards and wraps her
cloak around
And shudders at the first large drops upon
the peaceful ground—
It is coming—o'er the heavens are gather-
ing lurid clouds,
And men and women toil and work at
Thunderbolts and Shrouds.

October 24, 1863.

The Great Whaling Expedition

By Benny the Bo'sen

'T WAS in the Northern Sea,
Brave boys !
With BENBOW¹ did we sa-a-a-
ail,
When one stormy night
We went, not to fight,²
But we went for to catch a Whale,
Brave boys !
We went for to catch a Whale.

'Twas in the middle watch,
Brave boys !
As the wind was blowin' a ga-a-a-ale,
When the Mate sings out,
With a very loud shout,

¹ Real name suppressed from motives of delicacy.

² It was a vessel bound for the Pacific.

“ My dear eyes ! there is *such* a Whale !
Brave boys !
My dear eyes ! there is *such* a Whale ! ”

Cries the Captain, “ Port and belay,¹
Brave boys !
Bring the tackle as will not fa-a-a-ail,
Fetch the chains and the ropes,
'Cos I am in hopes
That we're *going* to catch that Whale,
Brave boys !
That we're *going* to catch that Whale.”

“ Geo ho ! ”² cries the man in the mizzen,
Brave boys !
“ Must I here my fate bewa-a-a-ail ? ”³
But no one would listen
To the man in the mizzen,

¹ Very sensible order, showing presence of mind in the moment of danger.

² No doubt he had some good reason for an exclamation, that is not, strictly speaking, of a nautical character.

³ He, too, would have been a sharer in the glory that awaited his more fortunate comrades ; but stern duty, or aloft duty, prevented him from joining the party on this occasion. This verse suggests a very touching picture of sublime and solitary resignation.

For we went to catch that Whale,
Brave boys !

For we went to catch that Whale.

The order to "lower the boats,"
Brave boys !

Made every stout heart qua-a-a-ail ;
But sternly we did

Whatever we wos bid,

And we pulled out to catch that Whale,
Brave boys !

We pulled out to catch that Whale.

Bring cutlasses, pikes, marlin-spikes,
Brave boys !

And whatever else will ava-a-a-ail ;
With hammers, knives, and brads,
So merrily we lads

Went out for to catch that Whale,
Brave boys !

Went out for to catch that Whale.

Asleep on the deep lay the brute,¹
Brave boys !

¹ The mariner's deep-seated hatred for the huge leviathan is inexplicable.

Like a mountain in a da-a-a-ale ;
The sea wasn't ruffled
By our oars, which was muffled,
As we *crept* up to catch that Whale,
Brave boys !

As we *crept* up to catch that Whale.

Harpoons by the score, mayhap more,
Brave boys !

Did the monster's side impa-a-a-ale ;
When we all saw him shiver
And percepterbilly quiver,
We shouted for joy to the Whale,
Brave boys !

We shouted "Hooray !" for the Whale.

He lashed, and he dashed, and he splashed,
Brave boys !

Till our boat we had to ba-a-a-ail ;
While the skipper he kep' on
A throwin' of his weapon,
Till he managed to hit that Whale,¹
Brave boys !

Till he managed to hit that Whale.

¹ Moral.—Perseverance meets with its due reward.

Pull your hackle, and your tackle, and
your lines,

Brave boys !

Your prize securely na-a-a-ail ;

“ Heave a-head ! ” cries the Cap’ en

Who’d ha’ thought o’ what ’ud happen,
As we strained and we craned at the
Whale,

Brave boys !

As we strained and we craned at the
Whale.

A long pull ! A strong pull !! He’s ours !!!

Brave boys !

When—fwhisk ! up went his ta-a-a-ail :

With our hooks and tackle too,

He vanished from our view,

So—we did not catch that Whale,

Brave boys !

So we did not catch that Whale.¹

February 25, 1865.

¹ It has been proposed to me, BENNY THE BO’SEN, to arrange the song in parts. But it needs only a careful study of the last verse to learn that the song would lose all its point if set as a catch.

Richard Cobden

Died April 2, 1865

SOLEMN and sad his task who,
from the shore,
Watches Time's slow but surely-
rising wave,
As landmark after landmark it sweeps o'er,
And whelms great things and men in one
wide grave.

So the pale sentinel on Neva's pier
Records the wasting waters' sullen swell,
Till all the pile-based city shakes for fear
Of some huge fall—church, palace, citadel.

I am not old who watch, but from my
post
What kingly strengths have I seen vail
their crown,

What statelinesses bowed, what pride and
boast

By those dark waters toppled, sudden,
down !

One more high tower has fallen, that stood
four-square,

Simple, and scant of ornament, but
strong,

As fits a fortalice, whose walls must
bear,

Sheltering Right, the rude assaults of
Wrong.

He had done work to fill a longer life,
And lived to see his life's work rounded
clean :

Seldom has sun that lit a morn of strife,
Set in the hush of evening so serene.

The man whose young strength struck the
shackles off

From England's toiling arm and trading
hand,

Lived to knit close—in spite of sneer and
scoff—

England and France in Traffic's triple
strand.

Poor in world's wealth, but rich in stainless
fame,

Untitled, yet a magnate in the land,
That honour blazons RICHARD COBDEN'S
name,

Which life well-lived and work well done
command.

Circumstance shaped his lot, as it shapes
all:

The path it oped seemed narrow, hard,
and bare;

No grace of letters made a flowery wall
To mask its bounds, nor arts, nor arms
passed there

The path of trade, that leads—who shall
say where?—

To humble competence, and low content,

To wealth and wisdom, or to wealth and
care,

To means hard-saved, to be as loosely
spent;

But rarely to a higher goal than pelf;

And few on *that* road ope a wider eye
Than grasps the vision of the trader's self,
Or second self—kith, kin, and progeny.

But on that path this man advancing, felt
The impulse of a great good far away:

Looked up, saw angels, and where others
knelt

To grope for gold, he knelt to dream and
pray.

Yes—knelt to *dream*: though bred to trade
and toil,

His was the dreamer's rapt and prescient
eye:

Thence came the wings that lifted him
from soil

Of sordid paths, and raised low aims to
high.

He saw Heaven's will by man's contrivance
barred :

Nature's kind pathways betwixt need
and need

Gated and fenced ; the Almighty purpose
marred,

That gave us diverse brains, thews, soils,
and seed.

Others, ere him, had seen and proved the
wrong,

But he the wrong determined to set right :
Weak in all else, in single purpose strong,
With Power, Wealth, Prejudice, he
braved the fight.

And won it, and was famous, powerful,
great :

But with the triumph laid the truncheon
by,

And in the ranks was proud to serve the
State,

Poor save in that which riches cannot
buy.

Loving, beloved, light of a happy hearth,
Life's common sun and shadow shared
his day ;
But with a nation's grief he fades from
earth,
And no cloud darkens o'er him, passed
away !

April 16, 1865.

A Love Lament

In Two Spasms

Founded upon Fiction

SPASM I

ABUTCHER, in the prime of life,
I wanted nothing but a wife,
And in MISS BULLOCK fondly thought

I'd found the helpmate that I sought :
Ox-eyed, but gentle as a lamb,
With jointure snug from UNCLE SAM,
A buxom girl with shapely waist
(A spare-rib would not suit my taste),
Of ready tongue and brains to match,
Admirers wooed her by the batch.

The Baker headed once the roll,
But lost his chance, the crusty soul ;

The Brewer broached the subject next,
"Too stout," she thought—old HALE was
vext;

The Grocer figg'd out in his best,
With citron gloves and spicy vest,
Too candi(e)d man, allowed that he
With sugared words had sought Miss B.
The Chandler praised her taper form,
And owned his looks were waxing warm;
The Miller—why prolong the list—
Soon got the sack, and was dismissed;
His bran new suit assumed in vain,
He ground his teeth and groaned again.
Indeed, with no desire to boast,
It seemed that I might rule the roast:
Her father gave me many a hint—
He kept "The Lamb," and served the
Mint—

That I was just the sort of man
He fancied for his MARY ANN;
Her mother saw good traits in me,
Appeased, I own, by bribery—
A sweetbread now, and now a fry,
And sometimes giblets for a pie—

While MARY ANN herself confessed
Of all her beaux she liked me best,
And cut out cages for the flies,
And coloured when I made sheep's eyes.

SPASM II

Farewell to all my killing looks,
My dreams that she would keep my books !
Farewell "the silver side" of life,
And MARY ANN—the *Brewer's* wife !
Yes, little "hops" and Maltese lace
Have robbed me of her ruddy face ;
Full-bodied HALE and treble X
Have won the loveliest of her sex :
The storm that was so long a-brewing,
Has burst and laid my hopes in ruin,
And, oh ! the unkindest cut of all—
They buy their meat of MADOX BALL !

The times are out of joint, and I
Look sheepish when she passes by :
In vain I try to steel my heart,
And act the injured lover's part ;
For one sweet smile, for one soft lock,
I'd lay my head upon the block ;

To win but one kind word or so,
Down on my marrowbones I'd go ;
Nay, if she bade me, for her sake
I would not murmur at the stake.
Unhappy man, of her bereft,
I've neither pluck nor spirit left !
Life's chops and changes I must bear
Alone, without a soul to share
The fat and lean, the weal and woe,
That Fate weighs out to all below.

April 22, 1865.

After the Fight

HABET! The fatal cast is made,
The well-poised net falls true,
Hamp'ring, alike, the trench-
ant blade,

And the strong hand that drew.

The world-wide Circus holds its breath
Between the lots of life and death;

Recalls the thrilling conflict's course—

Dear life to life opposed,
Courage that took no count of force,
But cheered, and charged, and closed :
Patience that from defeat arose,
And learnt to deal, by bearing, blows.

Till Circus-haunters, who had watched
Famed sword-plays, long ago,
And scorned these giants, rudely matched,
Felt admiration grow,
As stubborn strife to strength gave skill,
The art to guard, the craft to kill.

While the fight raged, men had but eyes
To watch its changing cheer ;
In lusty cheers and stifled cries,
Speaking their hope and fear ;
While foot to foot, and hand to hand,
Those bleeding brothers stained the sand.

Oft our short-sighted eyes misread
The chances of the fight,
Amazed to see him turn, who fled,
Him, who pursued, in flight.
But chance and change can shift no more,
Might is made clear, resistance o'er.

Bursts out in jubilee the crowd,
As with a single will ;
For exultation's tongue is loud,
While sympathy is still ;
Millions of throats the victor cheer,
But let the vanquished claim a tear.

Man's strife God's guidance doth o'errule,
His means and ends are veiled :
But all can see, when blood runs cool,
How well he fought that failed.

In him that, spent and snared, lies low,
Hate's self must own a noble foe.

Not always to the swift the race,
Nor to the brave the fight ;
But conquest's blest that adds the grace
Of mercy unto might.

Then let the sign that says "We spare,"
Be his that lieth, bleeding, there.

Let his blood purge the bitter sin
For which he fought so well,—
The right claimed for the whiter skin
Black life to buy and sell :
Its champion fall'n, that sin is slain,
Never, like him, to rise again.

Then staunch those gashes' crimson flood,
Brother take brother's hand,
And o'er the stain of kindred blood
Sweep smooth the trampled sand :
The life, unto your mercy given,
Spare, with acclaim of Earth and Heaven.

April 29, 1865.

Abraham Lincoln

Foully Assassinated April 14, 1865

YOU lay a wreath on murdered
LINCOLN'S bier,
You, who with mocking pencil
wont to trace,
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer,
His length of shambling limb, his
furrowed face,

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt,
bristling hair,
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease,
His lack of all we prize as debonair,
Of power or will to shine, of art to please.

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's
laugh,
Judging each step, as though the way
were plain :

Reckless, so it could point its paragraph,
Of chief's perplexity, or people's pain.

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding-sheet

The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,

Between the mourners at his head and feet.

Say, scurril-jester, is there room for *you*?

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,

To lame my pencil, and confute my pen—

To make me own this hind of princes peer,
This rail-splitter a true-born king of men.

My shallow judgment I had learnt to rue,
Noting how to occasion's height he rose,
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem
more true,

How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

How humble yet how hopeful he could be:
How in good fortune and in ill the same:

Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work—such work as few
Ever had laid on head and heart and
hand—

As one who knows, where there's a task
to do,
Man's honest will must Heaven's good
grace command ;

Who trusts the strength will with the
burden grow,
That God makes instruments to work
His will,
If but that will we can arrive to know,
Nor tamper with the weights of good
and ill.

So he went forth to battle, on the side
That he felt clear was Liberty's and
Right's,
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied
His warfare with rude Nature's thwart-
ing mights—

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,
The iron-bark, that turns the lumberer's
axe,
The rapid, that o'erbears the boatman's
toil,
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer's
tracks,

The ambushed Indian, and the prowling
bear—

Such were the needs that helped his
youth to train :

Rough culture—but such trees large fruit
may bear,

If but their stocks be of right girth and
grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to
do,

And lived to do it: four long-suffering
years'

Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report, lived through,
And then he heard the hisses change to
cheers,

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to
praise,

And took both with the same unwavering
mood:

Till, as he came on light, from darkling
days,

And seemed to touch the goal from where
he stood,

A felon hand, between the goal and him,
Reached from behind his back, a trigger
prest,—

And those perplexed and patient eyes were
dim,

Those gaunt, long-labouring limbs were
laid to rest!

The words of mercy were upon his lips,
Forgiveness in his heart and on his
pen,

When this vile murderer brought swift
eclipse

To thoughts of peace on earth, good-will
to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to
sea,

Utter one voice of sympathy and shame !
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat
high,

Sad life, cut short just as its triumph
came.

A deed accurst ! Strokes have been struck
before

By the assassin's hand, whereof men
doubt

If more of horror or disgrace they bore ;
But thy foul crime, like CAIN'S, stands
darkly out,

Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,
Whate'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly
striven ;

And with the martyr's crown crownest a
life

With much to praise, little to be forgiven !

May 6, 1865.

Charles Dickens

Died June 9, 1870

WHILE his life's lamp seemed
clearest, most intense,
A light of wit and love to
great and small,
By the dark angel he is summoned
hence,
To solve the mightiest mystery of
all!

Hearing that he has passed beyond the
veil,
Before the Judge who metes to men their
dues,
Men's cheeks, through English-speaking
lands, turn pale,
Far as the speaking wires can bear the
news—

Blanched at this sudden snapping of a
life,
That seemed of all our lives to hold a
share;
So were our memories with his fancies
rife,
So much of *his* thought *our* thoughts
seemed to bear.

CHARLES DICKENS dead! It is as if a light
In every English home were quenched
to-day;
As if a face all knew had passed from sight,
A hand all loved to press were turned to
clay.

Question who will his power, its range, its
height,
His wisdom, insight,—this at least we
know,
All in his love's warmth and his humour's
light
Rejoiced and revelled,—old, young, high
or low—

Learnèd, unlearnèd — from the boy at
school

To the judge on the bench, none read
but owned

The large heart o'er which the large brain
held rule,

The fancy by whose side clear sense sat
throned,

The observation that made all its own,
The shaping faculty that breathed life's
breath

In types, all felt they knew and still had
known,

Life-like, except that they are safe from
death.

Since SHAKSPEARE'S, where the pen that so
hath lent

Substance to airy nothings of the brain,
His fancies seem with men's experience
blent,

Till to take each for other we are
fain?

And who that ever wielded such a power
Used it so purely, to such Christian end,
Used it to quicken the millennial hour,
When rich to poor shall be as friend to friend?

Who can say how much of that love's pure leaven
That leavens now the lump of this our world,
With influence as of a present Heaven,
Like light athwart chaotic darkness hurled,

May be traced up to springs by him unsealed,
To clods by him stirred round affection's roots,
To hearts erst hard, but by his fires annealed
To softness whereof Love's works are the fruits.

Mourn, England, for another great one
gone

To join the great ones who have gone
before—

And put a universal mourning on,

Where'er sea breaks on English-speak-
ing shore.

His works survive him, and his works'
work too—

Of love and kindness and good will to men,
Hate of the wrong, and reverence of the
true,

And war on all that shuns truth's eagle-
ken.

Earth's two chief nations mourners at his
tomb :

Their memories for his monument : their
love

For his reward. Such is his glorious doom,
Whom mortal praise or blame no more
shall move !

June 18, 1870.

Henry Fawcett

Died November 6, 1884

VIRTUS *in arduis!* Valour
against odds
That must have daunted
courage less complete.
A spectacle to gladden men and meet
The calm approval of the gazing gods.
So some large singer of the heroic days
Might well have summed that life the
fatal shears
Too soon have severed. Many fruitful
years,
More conquests yet, still wider meed of
praise,
All hoped for him who had good will of all,—
The brave, the justly-balanced, calmly
strong
Friend of all truth and foe of every
wrong,

Who now, whilst lingering Autumn's last
leaves fall,

Falls death-touched suddenly far from
the goal.

Too soon! too soon! if the stern stroke
of fate

Ever too early falls or falls too late.

At least the passing of this clear strong soul
In fullest strength and clearness wakes
lament.

We could have better spared a hundred
loud,

Incontinent, blaring flatterers of the
crowd

Than him, whose self-respecting years
were spent

In silent thought and sense-directed toil,
Ungagged by greed, unshackled and un-
swayed

By sordid impulse of the sophist's trade,
By lies unsnared, and unseduced by spoil.

No braver conquest o'er ill-fortune's flout

Our age has seen than his who held
straight on,

Though the great God-gift from his days
was gone,

“And Wisdom at one entrance quite shut
out,”—

Held on with genial stoutness, seeing more
Than men with sight undarkened, but
with mind

Through prejudice and Party bias blind.
As man of light and leading far before
The “foolish fires” of faction though they
flare,

Betraying beacons, in the battle’s van.

Vale! A valid and a valiant man!

Ampler horizons and serener air

Await the fighter of so good a fight,

Than favour Party’s low mist-haunted
hollow.

Heart-deep regrets and honest plaudits
follow

Him who has passed from darkness into
light.

November 15, 1884.

Explanatory

- 1846. The Repeal of the Corn Laws.
- 1846-47. The famine in Ireland.
- 1851. Opening of the great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace.
- 1854-56. The Crimean War.
- 1857-59. The Indian Mutiny.
- 1863. Marriage of Albert Edward and Alexandra.
- 1861-65. The American Civil War.

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